



Title      The communication of emotions in England and  
             Poland: Compliments and refusals

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THE COMMUNICATION OF EMOTIONS  
IN ENGLAND AND POLAND:  
COMPLIMENTS AND REFUSALS

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THE COMMUNICATION OF EMOTIONS  
IN ENGLAND AND POLAND:  
COMPLIMENTS AND REFUSALS

by

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## **Abstract**

### THE COMMUNICATION OF EMOTIONS IN ENGLAND AND POLAND: COMPLIMENTS AND REFUSALS

Joanna Bhatti

Previous research has shown some significant differences in the way speech acts are made and responded to in different cultures and languages. This study investigates two speech acts in particular, compliments and refusals, in two specific cultures, England and Poland. The project investigates the role of emotions in communication and social interaction with reference to these speech acts, which are particularly interesting due to their opposite emotional valence: compliments are perceived as positive and refusals are negative. English and Polish compliments and refusals are investigated as the two cultures are often perceived as proximate, which suggests that the observed differences will be particularly interesting as they have the potential to shed light on important and yet intractable distinguishing features of the two cultures.

The research has two lines of investigation: theoretical and empirical. The theoretical aspect of research aims to bring together insights on the role of emotions in communication and a cognitive perspective on communication to explain the functions of compliments and refusals in social interaction and the relation between the cognitive and affective aspects of the production and reception of these speech acts.

The empirical part of the research is based on an original study that presents new insights into complimenting and refusing behaviour in English and Polish culture. The comparison of English and Polish findings reveals many similarities in complimenting behaviour and some striking differences in refusing behaviour

(most notably, Polish speakers tend to be less congruent than English speakers when making refusals and their refusals tend to be more detailed and more elaborate). The pragmatic analysis of the data has some interesting implications for the classification of compliment responses, suggesting that the classification should be based on appreciation, rather than on acceptance or rejection.

## DECLARATION

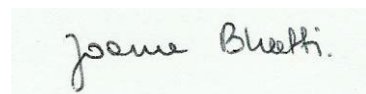
I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of

PhD at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name of candidate: Joanna Bhatti

Signature:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Joanna Bhatti".

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2014

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The research presented in this thesis investigates the production and reception of the speech acts of compliment and refusal in the cultures of England and Poland, focusing on the relation between their cognitive and affective-emotional effects.

The study is based on some theoretical concepts and perspectives on culture, emotions and communication which are introduced and considered in the context of the relevant literature in a way which provides the basis for exploring the relations between communication and emotion in a principled and theoretically well motivated way (Chapters 1 to 4). The second part of the thesis presents the empirical research conducted as part of the project (Chapters 5 and 6). The implications of Relevance-theoretic pragmatics for the analysis of the findings and the conclusions that follow from the pragmatic analysis are given in Chapter 7.

The present study compares and contrasts compliments and refusals in the cultures of England and Poland. Studies on speech acts have been a point of interest for many years now and in the past four decades have focused on speech acts in a variety of languages and cultures. The investigation of speech acts has led researchers to make claims about their universality and cultural specificity; it has revealed the social implications conveyed by models of performance of those speech acts, and uncovered cultural differences in interactive strategies (Blum-Kulka, House, Kasper 1989). The research on speech acts across cultures provides researchers with insights into the various patterns of human communicative interaction and offers material for cross-cultural comparisons of speech acts. The originality of this research comes from comparing two different speech acts in two different cultures, as opposed to investigating one speech act across cultures, as has been done in most previous research.

The thesis examines the most plausible definitions of culture relevant to this research and questions the ones that are very limited and generic (Chapter 1). The discussion of culture then is related to the first objective of this study, which is an

investigation of two speech acts: compliments and refusals in the cultures of England and Poland (Chapter 2). This chapter introduces some previous studies on compliments and refusals and provides an account of intercultural aspects of speech act research. The second major theme of the study, affective-emotional effects of complements and refusals in the cultures of England and Poland, is introduced through building an overview of perceptions on emotions based on previous research (Chapter 3). This chapter sets up the context for the discussion of the role of emotions in communication, which has not been fully developed in previous research. To explore this issue, Chapter 4 presents theoretical background for pragmatic research. It defines communication, Relevance Theory and the concepts that play an important role in discussing communicative acts, such as relevance, context and linguistic politeness. Chapter 5 discusses the methodology of data collection. The findings of the study are presented in Chapter 6, which is followed by a discussion of the results in relation to the theoretical accounts introduced in Chapters 1 to 4 and addressing the objectives of this research.

## **1.1 Concepts for describing culture**

The concept of ‘culture’ seems to be reasonably tractable, if not easy to define explicitly. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) characterize culture as a collection of explicit and implicit patterns of, and for behaviour transmitted by, symbolic mental and physical representations of the world. This, however, does not amount to a definition of ‘culture’ for several reasons.

First, not all representations can be described as cultural. For instance, a physical object will be considered as cultural when a mental representation of this object as having a particular name, function, value etc. is shared by a group of people.

Second, the number of people that need to share this mental representation needs to be considerable.

Third, a cultural representation needs to be shared persistently over a long period of time and influence other aspects of social life, e.g. a system of moral beliefs, religion. Therefore, cultural representations need to be distinguished from short-lived practices which are only shared by a small number of people, for a relatively short period of time and has very limited influence over social life.

Considering culture from the perspective of Sperber's (1996) epidemiological approach, Žegarac (2008: 49) observes that 'culture crucially involves the way we mentally represent and think about the world (...)'. Mental representations of the world that are relatively stable and shared by the members of a social group are described as cultural. Cultural representations allow us to distinguish one social group from another. The boundaries between cultures can be very vague and difficult to explain. Sperber's epidemiological approach to defining and describing culture offers a natural and simple explanation: representations shared by the members of a culture are not identical, but highly similar:

Just like an epidemic does not affect all individuals in an area to the same extent (typically, some people are more seriously afflicted by the disease than others), we should not expect all members of a culture to share all cultural representations. The "epidemiological" perspective on culture suggests that it is cultural regularity, rather than cultural diversity, that should be surprising. (Žegarac, 2008: 51)

On this view, no two members of a culture share the same similar representations and the population of people who share similar sets of representations are not entirely homogenous. Thus, the geographical edges of a culture include a population whose members may: (a) have representations belonging to several cultural systems, (b) be mixed with members of other cultures bordering on theirs and (c) be more dispersed than in the central regions. **Cultures, therefore, are not spatially bound. They go beyond geographical borders and are based on shared representations and values. The definition of culture discussed above seems the most descriptively adequate and has been adopted in this thesis. It is assumed that the participants of this study share some sets of representations and values as a sample of population affiliated with the cultures of England and Poland was**

selected on the basis of similarities that they have, such as origin, spoken language and area of residence, e.g. Polish respondents lived and studied/ worked in Poland, they came from the same area and studied towards similar university degree (see Section 5.5).

Central to much work on culture in the fields of social pragmatics and intercultural communication have been Hofstede's (1994) concept of dimensions of culture (the most commonly discussed dimension being 'individualism-collectivism'), and Hall's (1981) distinction between 'low-context' and 'high-context' cultures. These concepts have been used in much work as the basis for describing and contrasting individual cultures. This project briefly touches upon these concepts to critically review them, showing why they should be rejected in favour of the approach discussed above. For this reason, it seems worth considering whether they could also be used to shed light on the causal links between the ways compliments and refusals are communicated and responded to in the cultures of England and Poland. These concepts, however, are discussed critically in this work (See Section 1.2) in support of the definition of culture based on shared representations, rather than geographical borders as it was assumed by Hofstede (1994) and Hall (1981) concepts (See Section 1.1.1 and 1.1.2).

### **1.1.1 Individualism and Collectivism**

Hofstede (1980:14) introduced the concept of 'mental programme'. A mental programme (which includes both a culture and the values associated with it) cannot be directly observed. Rather, it is inferred from behaviour and words. "Mental programs" are intangible, and the terms we use to describe them are *constructs*. A construct is a product of our imagination, and its purpose is to make understanding possible and improve it. Constructs do not "exist" in an absolute sense: We define them into existence' (Hofstede, 1980: 14). In terms of the epidemiological approach to culture (Sperber, 1996) Hofstede's constructs are interpretive (inductive) generalizations based on data (obtained by various



means). According to Hofstede 'mental programming' distinguishes one group from another. He also assumes that a domestic population in each of the countries investigated by his study is a homogeneous whole. This is incompatible with the assumptions central to Sperber's (1996) epidemiological approach, which considers individuals, rather than whole nations, as cultural units. Sperber's view seems to be descriptively more plausible in defining culture. Looking at shared representations between individuals creates more scope for a discussion of cultural differences than focusing on a limited number of dimensions which are insufficient. These are considerable flaws of Hofstede's conceptualisation of the notion of a cultural dimension (see 1.2 for more detailed discussion).

Hofstede's view on culture is considered in this section as contrasting with Sperber's, which does not suffer from its flaws. Individualism and collectivism are among Hofstede's five dimensions of national cultures. These dimensions refer to the relationships between the members of a given culture, such as having a preference for working alone or in groups and, more generally, 'the extent to which individuals are integrated into groups' (Hofstede, 1991: 51; Hofstede and Peterson, 2000: 401). According to Hofstede, there are two types of relationship between members of society: the first type, individualism, focuses on the interests of an individual over the interests of a group, as opposed to the second type: collectivism, which refers to a group's (e.g. family) identity and group's interests taking priority over individual needs (Hofstede, 1994: 50). Individualism is described as a social framework of loosely-knit relationships, where individuals are expected to look only after themselves and their immediate families. In contrast to individualism, collectivism is characterised by a preference for tight-knit relationships, where individuals can expect the members of their in-group and their relatives to look after them in exchange for unconditional loyalty. These dimensions are reflected in people's image, i.e. whether they define their self-image in terms of *I* or *we*. They are also related to the degree of independence among the members of a given society and the degree of social integrity.

Hofstede (1994) has developed a system for scoring cultures along the individualism-collectivism scale based on survey questions related to work goals

to measure the degrees of individualism in a society. The individualism index is one of the cultural dimensions and its score is low for collectivist societies (e.g. Guatemala has a score of 6) and high for individualist societies (e.g. the USA with a score of 91). It is unclear, however, what the scores are actually derived from and what the numbers are assigned to. The coding was very computational and mathematical as Hofstede (1991:24-25) based his system on assigning score numbers to pre-coded answer types, which were then calculated using statistical procedures for calculating mean scores and percentages. The questions were clustered together on the basis of their theme and Hofstede's assumption was that if a country scored high on one question from the cluster, it would also score high on the questions from that cluster and the other way round, if it scored low on one, the rest in a given cluster would also be low. This procedure, although, it provides some data and a variety of scores, does not seem reasonable as it tries to measure something that potentially should not be derived from statistical analysis but from more descriptive procedures.

According to Hofstede (2001) and Hofstede et al. (2010), the United Kingdom has a score of 89 in terms of individualism, so English society which is part of the UK is highly individualistic and private. Members of society are expected from an early age to invest in their personal development, to find their unique way of contributing to society and to focus on personal fulfilment as a way of gaining happiness.

With a relatively high score of 60, Poland is also an individualist society. Yet, the degree of individualism in Poland is lower than in the UK. Polish culture is traditionally characterized as hierarchical, with a rather considerable level of social distance and hierarchy being relatively important in social interaction. The power-distance score for Poland is high, and Hofstede argues that a high power distance score is usually expected in collectivist cultures, such as China. So, on this dimension at least, Polish culture seems to be a collectivist, rather than an individualist culture.

### 1.1.2 High and low context

Another concept for describing culture come from the work of Edward Hall and these were selected for the analysis because they relate culture to communication. Hofstede's cultural dimensions are used in this thesis to demonstrate that cultural proximity does not derive from national values but shared representations that go beyond country's borders. Since culture and shared presentations that members of the same culture hold, influence the way people communicate, it is important to introduce a framework that attempts to bring together culture and communication.

Hall's (1981) concept of discussing cultures in terms of the high- versus low-context distinction is also flawed and unrealistic in discussing cultural differences. Similarly, to Hofstede (See Section 1.1.1 above), Hall (ibid) does not provide a clear explanation of reasons for placing different countries on a scale. He also seems to be in favour of national culture. According to Edward Hall (1981):

One of the functions of culture is to provide a highly selective screen between man and the outside world. In its many forms, culture therefore determines what we pay attention to and what we ignore. This screening function provides structure for the world and protects the nervous system from information overload. (Hall, 1981: 85).

This 'selective attention' is important as events are often more complex than the language used to describe them. Usually some interpretations are selected at the expense of others on the basis of the type of a particular subject or activity, social status, the context of situation, past experience and culture. For example, twins who grow up together tend to communicate more economically (high context communication) than two lawyers in a courtroom during trial (low context communication) (from Hall 1981: 91).

Hall (1981) mentions the importance of context (i.e. the way of looking at things that makes it possible to automatically correct for distortions or omissions of information in messages: Hall, 1981:113, 117; see Section 4.5 for a more detailed

definition of the concept of 'context' in relation to communication) and information overload (i.e. the huge volume of information that cannot be handled properly and causes the breakdown of an information – processing system; Hall, 1981:85) as two concepts that are functionally related in describing cultures. In Hall's view:

The level of context determines everything about the nature of the communication and is the foundation on which all subsequent behaviour rests (including symbolic behaviour). (Hall, 1981:92).

As Kittler observes, Hall also 'introduced the idea that individuals combine pre-programmed elements (culture-specific context) and information to create meaning. The use of context is argued to vary across cultures' (Kittler et al 2011: 65)

The utterance *It rained last night* uttered does not indicate how a person would arrive at this conclusion (e.g. it is not clear just by looking at this utterance whether the person has seen the rain actually falling or has seen puddles when they woke up in the morning) or whether the person's report of their conclusion is true or not (e.g. the person may be simply lying), whereas a Hopi (a member of a Native American tribe) would not utter a sentence without indicating his/her relation to this event, i.e. whether it was based on first-hand experience or hearsay (Hall, 1981:87 referring to example provided by Whorf 1956). In the English culture a person needs more contextual information to interpret the message correctly (low context) in comparison to the Hopi culture, where context is 'pre-programmed' in utterances (high context).

Hall (1981) defines 'the high-low context continuum' as the 'degree to which one is aware of the selective screen that one places between himself and the outside world. As one moves from the low to the high side of the scale, awareness of the selective process increases (Hall 1981:86).

High context cultures tend to be more indirect. 'A high-context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the

physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message' (Hall, 1981: 91), whereas in low context cultures 'the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code' so the interpretation of the communicative act depends on the context to a lesser extent (Hall, 1981: 91). It seems plausible to take the view that high context cultures develop in socio-cultural groups whose members have a rich common ground, so can rely on each other's ability to be able to select many contextual assumptions required for the interpretation of a communicative act successfully.

The idea of a message being conveyed in the physical context (i.e. physical surrounding) in high context cultures can be addressed by drawing on Dell Hymes' Speaking Grid (1974), especially the concepts of SETTING and SCENE. Basically, the setting is the physical context and the scene is the psychological construal of the situation. (It is worth noting here that in Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986; 1995) terms, the SETTING also has to be psychological, because in interpreting the act of communication we do not draw on the physical surroundings directly, but via mental representations of it.

Another comment on the issue discussed above relates to the definition of high-context culture which relates to the concept of indirectness (see Section 4.7 for more detailed discussion of indirectness). In indirect communication the message depends largely on the context (see Section 4.5) and is not specified by the language (or other) code used for communication. In effect, it may seem that High-context simply means high level of indirectness. However, this is not correct because context may, and very often does, contribute in a major way to the proposition expressed by the utterance. For example, the utterance 'It's the same' can express directly a range of thoughts such as: 'Ibuprofen is the same as Neurofen' or 'The jumper I am wearing today is the same jumper I was wearing when we last met', and so on (see Carston, 2002). For this reason, 'High-context culture' should not be described as one in which people rely on indirectness, but, rather, as one whose members rely on the context to a comparatively large extent in both direct and indirect communication.

(In)directness in communication needs to be considered in more detail. First, the degree of indirectness relates to the complexity of the inferential process of figuring out the interpretation: the more inferential steps are involved, the more indirect the communicative act is (see Thomas, 1995 and Chapter 4 for observations on the merits of Relevance Theory for describing levels of indirectness). Second, the complexity of the inferential process involved in the interpretation does not depend only on the extent to which the message is linguistically (or otherwise) encoded, but also on the extent to which the link between the communicative act and the message has been established through regular use and is standardized or conventionalised. The more standardised or conventionalised the relation between the utterance and the message is, the fewer inferential steps will be needed for the interpretation. For this reason, the utterance ‘Can you pass the salt?’ said by one of the people having a meal together is not a very indirect request to have the salt passed to the speaker: questions beginning with ‘Can you...’ on such occasions are standardly used as requests for action, rather than as requests for information. Third, a message which has been conveyed indirectly can be communicated more or less strongly/weakly. An assumption is said to be communicated strongly to the extent that it is conclusively supported by the evidence that the communicator intends to communicate it. And conversely, an assumption is communicated weakly to the extent that the evidence of the communicator's intention to communicate that assumption by the communicative act is inconclusive, i.e. weak, as in the example below:

John: What are you planning to do today?

Mary: I’m tired.

(Allott, 2010: 196)

Mary’s response does not indicate whether she has any plans or not and whether she treats John’s question as an invitation, e.g. to do something together.

To make it evident that Mary is interested in making plans with John, she should have given a different response, for instance: ‘I’m free’. The message in this

example is communicated strongly and indicates that whatever the speaker's (John's) intention was, the communicator (Mary) implies that she is not interested in making plans with John.

Hall's distinction between high-context and low-context cultures is closely related to another pair of theoretical constructs. Basil Bernstein (1964) used the somewhat misleading terms 'restricted' (involving the use of short, abbreviated, words and sentences) and 'elaborated' (involving the use of highly specific, accurate and detailed) language structures corresponding to high-context and low-context, respectively (1964, in Hall 1981:92), arguing that members of social groups with access to only the restricted code were disadvantaged both cognitively (because they were less able to engage in abstract complex reasoning) and socially (because they did not have access to spheres of social life participation in which depends on complex explicit abstract reasoning and formal written communication). The terms 'restricted' and 'elaborated' are misleading because each of the two terms could refer to an inherent property of the code as a system (linguistic competence) or to the way the code is used (linguistic performance). Bernstein's views are very controversial and have been criticised and largely dismissed. From the perspective of modern pragmatics (Grice, 1989; Sperber and Wilson, 1986), which has highlighted the general orientation of participants in communication to avoid being more elaborate than is necessary for conveying the message successfully, Bernstein's views are not plausible. Other things being equal, it is to be expected that participants in communication will tend to encode linguistically as little as is necessary for conveying their messages successfully. Copeland and Griggs (1986) have investigated levels of these dimensions in various cultures. According to their classification, the UK seems to be a higher context culture, than Poland.

## 1.2 Criticisms of cultural dimensions

### 1.2.1 Individualism-Collectivism distinction

Both the individualism-collectivism dimension and the high-context low-context distinction seem inadequate. According to Holliday (2000; 1999) there are two major perspectives on culture: essentialist (positivist) and non-essentialist (interpretive). Hofstede's and Hall's views belong to the essentialist group based on values that differentiate national cultures. The non-essentialist view is based on concepts used by many authors writing at various times. Sperber's (1996) work falls in this category, as he focuses on cultural representations rather than values in explaining culture.

On the one hand, the theoretical plausibility of the terms 'individualism' and 'collectivism' is suspect. Surprisingly, this criticism is supported by Hofstede's own observation that these constructs are the product of the researcher's imagination. This raises serious questions about their plausibility and usefulness. In particular, it should lead to the realization that these concepts are not explanatory. In other words, explanations of the type: 'person X is behaving in a particular way Y. Behaviour Y is typical of a collectivist culture. Person X is known to be a member of a collectivist culture. Therefore, person X behaves in way Y because X comes from a collectivist culture. This explanation uses a construct which is the product of inductive generalization to explain the type of specific behaviour which lends support to the generalisation which is based on it. This is clearly methodologically unsound. The logical mistake here is that the *explanandum* is used to explain the *explanans*. Members of collectivist societies often show a preference for individualistic values, e.g. in their professional life, whereas in private life, they would still perceive themselves as having strong family bonds. On the other hand: members of individualist societies may have strong family bonds and friendships. Oyserman et al. (2002) and Miller (2002) claim that 'it is observed that although individualism and collectivism have at times been regarded as opposites, they have increasingly come to be understood



as orientations that are found in all societies and that are evident in the psychological functioning of all individuals' (Miller, 2002: 98). Therefore, this division is very limited and there is a need to introduce other distinctions (e.g. Triandis 1989, 1996; Oyserman et al. 2002). Another argument against the explanatory value of Hofstede's approach is provided by analogies like the following. Let's assume you observe a person who never eats meat and then you hypothesize that the reason for this is that the person in question is vegetarian. First, people can avoid eating meat for a variety of reasons (say allergy to meat). Secondly, (and this is an even more serious problem) they may be vegetarian for a whole range of different reasons. For example, a person may be opposed to breeding animals in order to kill them, or they may believe that eating meat is actually not healthy, or their religious beliefs may prohibit eating meat. So, even if we are right in hypothesizing that the person in question is vegetarian, we still need to know something about their motivation for being vegetarian. By the same token, even if 'individualism' and 'collectivism' do exist as valid interpretive generalizations, they are nevertheless not essential properties of cultures, just as vegetarianism does exist but may be motivated by very different mental representations. All vegetarians are committed to not eating meat for various reasons. By the same token, some representations are shared by collectivists/individualists but there is no such thing as essential characteristic of collectivism/individualism, i.e. not all collectivists/individualists are alike, they may share certain values and beliefs, but these may be based on very different cultural representations.

A number of people working in the field of cognitive science, anthropology and linguistics (e.g. Sperber, 1996; Jackendoff, 1992) have argued that one of the modules (i.e. one of the dedicated mental mechanisms) of the mind is the social faculty module responsible for the development of our individual and social identities. From this point of view, the collectivist and individualist orientations are aspects of individual psychology which are shaped partly by the person's individual genetic endowment and partly by the social environment. So, we have innate biases towards both individualism and collectivism and life in the social

environments interacts with these individual dispositions to shape our personal identities. A critic of Hofstede could argue that patterns of people's behaviour, their judgements and perceptions are not organised neatly into discrete patterns which warrant a sweeping categorization of socio-cultural groups into individualist and collectivist.

One of the criticisms raised against Hofstede's research on national cultural dimensions was his assumption that cultures are homogeneous and that a nation can be assessed as a whole, rather than by the characters of individuals (Jones, 2007:7). He also relies on only an 'average' or 'central' 'tendency' of responses (Hofstede, 1991: 253) in his investigation of cultural dimensions, which is an oversimplification.

Equally vulnerable to criticism is Hofstede's view of a culture as a mental program shared by the members of the culture. The culture-as-mental-programme metaphor is both insightful and potentially misleading. Taken literally, this metaphor suggests that the normal way is for cultures to be homogeneous, to consist of members who have identical 'mental programs'. However, variation within cultures (especially national cultures) is such that the whole construct of national culture seems rather suspect.

National divisions seem to be vague as cultures are not bounded by borders but can be fragmented across groups of people. Anderson (1991) has argued that the term 'nations' denotes 'imagined communities'. McSweeney (2002) claims that Hofstede's cultural dimensions are an attempt to measure entities that are immeasurable and 'his findings could be judged solely on the basis of their predictive value by reviewing the many smaller-scale replications' (McSweeney, 2002: 90).

Hofstede's (2002) lame response to the criticisms originally raised by Brendan McSweeney (2002a; also see McSweeney, 2002b) was with that usually nations are the only units available for such comparisons.

Hofstede's research methodology has also been criticised. One of the criticisms concerns cross-cultural research in general. For instance, the concept of culture is

defined differently by different researchers and it is understood differently by various people. Some may use the term culture to refer to a society as a whole, whereas others will understand culture through their basic cultural unit which is their family. Therefore, there is a chance that the clarity of questions was poor. There is also an issue with equivalence in the meanings of technical terms (Jones, 2007). Conceptual equivalence, for example, 'regards the cultural utility of behaviour and attitudinal constructs' (Jones, 2007:6). This relates to different conceptualizations of some important categories across cultures. To give but one example, 'loyalty' (as part of Hofstede's collectivism and individualism dimensions) to family members or devotion to workplace may be perceived differently depending on the cultural context. Jones (2007) uses the case of company loyalty in Asia and in Australia, where in Asia being devoted to a workplace may be seen as following the rules, whereas in Australia the loyalty involves not breaking the rules.

### **1.2.2 The 'high-context'-'low-context' distinction**

The distinction between high-context and low-context cultures also seems to be superficial and too general. Orientation towards communicative directness and indirectness in cross-cultural studies tends to be very vague. Depending on the context, members of each culture can have different preferences in the ways they communicate, e.g. among strangers or close friends with whom they have a lot in common.

The linguistic resources available to people and the communication styles they have been socialized into significantly constrain the range of social roles that they have access to. High-context speech may be used to exclude non-group members from the communication process as they lack the contextual knowledge required to interpret the words (and other communicative signals) used. A high level of implicitness in communication is often possible only between people who manifestly share many contextual assumptions (e.g. because they know each other very well). At the same time, low context can be interpreted as a sign of a more

distant relationship between the participants in a conversation, because the communicator, by being more implicit than necessary provides evidence of not counting on the addressee's ability to rely heavily on contextual knowledge in interpreting the communicative act if it is evident that such contextual knowledge is available to the addressee. A plausible explanation for this may be that by being evidently more explicit than is necessary the communicator intends to implicate that she/he is socially distant from the addressee.

Over 200 articles have been published since 1990 discussing Hall's low-high context model and culture (Warner-Söderholm, 2013). The majority of these (e.g. Warner-Söderholm 2013, Kittler et al. 2011; Cardon 2008) conclude that Hall's classifications are based on inadequate empirical evidence (data was collected through observations and interviews that are documented through anecdotes) and that he doesn't offer a specific ranking, which would make it possible to position countries on a continuum, or a tool to measure the level of high-low context. Dubious country classification makes comparisons difficult and requires empirical validation of the limited findings that were obtained (Hall's researched has not been published in any peer reviewed journals, Cardon, 2008).

### **1.3 Cultural Proximity**

Cultural proximity and cultural distance can be characterised explicitly in non-essentialist terms within Sperber's (1996) epidemiological approach (Section 1.1, see also Kolman et al, 2013 for discussion of cultural representations).

Cultural proximity (or cultural distance) is described in terms of the concept of 'centrality of cultural representations', where a cultural representation is central to the extent that it affects many spheres of social life. According to Žegarac (2007:10):

'Two or more individuals/groups are culturally close to the extent that their shared set of cultural representations is large and to the extent that the centrality of these cultural representations is high.

OR:

Two or more individuals/groups are culturally distant to the extent that their shared set of cultural representations is small and to the extent that the centrality of these cultural representations is low.’ (ibid).

The general assumption is that the greater cultural closeness between people and the more cognitive resources they share, the more successful communication between them will be. However, this shared knowledge may be inadequate in some situations:

- a) When the cultural distance between the participants is not significant enough to have an effect on the communication success and therefore, is not accommodated by the interlocutors (intra-cultural communication)
- b) When the cultural distance between the participants is significant and, unless accommodated properly, it may have an adverse effect on successful communication (inter-cultural communication)

This distinction is important for the present research project as each of the two sets of data is collected among the participants from the same culture (the Polish and the English group answer questions in their native languages during interactions with representatives from their own culture; see Section 5.5 and [Appendices 1-3](#) for the study design). Yet, the findings are analysed on the basis of comparison of the two cultures and potential similarities and differences between them. Here, the cultural distance needs to be accommodated to investigate its impact on communication.

The cultures of England and Poland are proximate due to the geographical location of the countries, their shared history and similarities in socio-economical situation. [Geographical proximity can be potentially linked to cultural similarity based on a range of representations, shared values, traditions etc. \(see Section 1.1\) and this is one of the reasons for cross-cultural research on speech acts being often focused on distant cultures, such as the US and China.](#) English and Polish cultures

could be described as opposites from the perspective of cultural dimensions (see Sections 1.1.2 and 1.1.3) and the differences between them seem to be the main point of interest. However, in the ‘epidemiological’ perspective on culture Žegarac (2008) suggests that ‘it is similarity, rather than cultural diversity, that should be surprising’ and that ‘cultural variation occurs within the range of possibilities allowed by human cognition’ (2008:51). Moreover, the members of each culture are not expected to share all cultural representations typical of the culture. Therefore, exceptions in cultural patterns tend to be more interesting and build a more detailed image of a particular culture. This explains the need for collecting data from a substantial number of informants when conducting cross-cultural research (see Chapter 5), and to be cautious about making generalizations. The cultural dimensions discussed in this chapter refer to the relationships between members of society (e.g. family members, strangers) and rapport that people build. This study investigates patterns of responses in the exchanges between people who know each other (e.g. family members, friends; See Section 5.5.1 and Appendices 1-3 for study design).

This chapter presented definitions of some basic concepts, such as culture and cultural proximity and provides a critical overview of two broad approaches to culture: the essentialist/value-based perspectives of Hofstede and Hall and the interpretivist/representations-based epidemiological approach of Sperber. This is an introduction into the in the chapters that follow. Chapter 2 presents an overview of speech act research with a particular focus on compliments and refusals to set the stage for the data analysis in Chapter 6 and the discussion of the findings in Chapter 7.

## **Chapter 2: Speech Acts**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the research field and background information about the research presented in this thesis. The concept of ‘speech act’ in communication is introduced in Section 2.2, the study rationale is outlined in Section 2.3. Section 2.4 considers briefly the importance of institutionalization for the pragmatic investigation of the speech acts of compliment and refusal. The overview of previous research on these speech acts (with particular focus on their use in England and Poland) is presented in Sections 2.5 (compliments) and 2.6 (refusals). Section 2.7 includes a brief summary of this chapter.

This study presents new insights into cross cultural similarities and differences in complimenting and refusing in England and Poland. These new insights are based on original empirical research, the cognitive Relevance-theoretic perspective on human communication (which has not been used to investigate this subject matter before) in analysing the data, research on the nature of emotions and their role in social interaction (which has not been brought together with a cognitive framework of communication in explaining the functions of speech acts in rapport management so far) and a range of previous comparative studies on compliments and refusals in England and Poland.

The research makes a contribution to existing knowledge about compliments and refusals in England and Poland, by providing new data and investigating the relation between cognitive and affective aspects of social interaction. It puts Relevance Theory to the test by exploring its merits and limitations for describing and explaining the cognitive and affective aspects of the production and reception of speech acts (such as compliments and refusals) in different cultures (such as those of England and Poland).

The most influential models of human communication are descriptive and cognitive (see Schiffrin (1994) for an overview of various approaches to discourse). They aim to describe and explain how propositional (truth-conditional) messages are conveyed by rational communicators and set out to discover the standards of rationality which underlie communicative behaviour. As emotions are claimed to be non-cognitive, i.e. non-propositional (see Chapter 3), an important challenge for an adequate account of communication is to spell out the relation between the cognitive, propositional, and the non-cognitive, affective-emotional, aspects of communicative interaction in a principled and theoretically well-motivated way. Although emotions are among the causes and among the effects of communicative behaviour, the relation between the cognitive and the affective aspects of communicative interaction have not been investigated systematically within the framework of a general theory of human communication. For this reason, the focus on the relation between the communication of compliments and refusals in a cross-cultural perspective is theoretically the most interesting aspect of the present study.

## **2.2 The Concept of ‘Speech Act’ in Communication**

The literature on Speech Act theory is vast. This section provides the bare minimum of information about the concept of ‘speech act’ which is required for understanding and justifying the approach to the cross-cultural investigation of ‘compliments’ and ‘refusals’ presented in this study. A ‘speech act’ is an act that a speaker performs when producing an utterance; it may contain just one word (e.g. *Sorry*) or several words or sentences (*I’m sorry I’m late, but I completely forgot about today’s meeting*). A speech act is a minimal functional unit of human communication defined as a performance of certain kinds of acts, such as making statements, asking questions, giving orders, thanking, congratulating, describing, explaining, apologising, etc. (Searle et al. 1980).

Three types of act are distinguished in Speech Act Theory: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. In Searle’s (1969) view, a ‘locutionary act’ is an



act of uttering/writing a string of words, an ‘illocutionary act’ is the act of conveying the speaker’s intended meaning of the utterance and a ‘perlocutionary act’ aims to achieve a particular type of impact on the addressee (in virtue of performing the locutionary and illocutionary acts). Emotions in social interaction seem to be explained naturally as perlocutionary effects of locutionary and illocutionary acts.

Searle (1969) identifies five classes of speech acts which include assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. He also proposes ‘indirect speech acts’ as linguistic means in which understanding of the indirect meaning depends on the interlocutors’ mutually shared knowledge, both linguistic and non-linguistic, to achieve effective communication. In other words, Searle acknowledges that speech act theory must be supplemented by a pragmatic account of the way context is chosen in the inferential process of utterance interpretation.

Speech acts have been studied for a comparatively long time within the philosophy of language, semantics and pragmatics (Austin 1962; Searle 1965, 1969; Wierzbicka 1985; Cohen 1996; Martínez Flor et al. 2010). The present study falls in the broad field of pragmatics. Within pragmatics, the speech acts of compliment and refusal have traditionally been examined in the context of linguistic politeness and face (Goffman 1967; Brown and Levinson 1978/1987). The main focus of much of this work is the relation between the universal features of communication and the language- and culture-specific characteristics of particular types of speech act. This study also investigates emotional responses to producing compliments, as well as responding to compliments and refusals based on the data elicited from English and Polish participants. The data was elicited using a combination of written DCTs and spoken (recordings and unscripted and semi-scripted radio interviews) data.

## 2.3 Institutionalised Speech Acts

In the context of this study, 'institutionalisation' refers to the systematicity (and often the appropriateness) of certain speech acts in social situations as part of convention. In other words, there is a social expectation for these speech acts to be performed in particular types of situation (e.g. congratulating the parents on a new born baby). Speakers are usually aware of these speech acts and situational contexts in which they are appropriate and they often perform them spontaneously, without conscious planning. For a speech act to be considered conventional, assumptions about its meaning (and awareness of this meaning) and its use in a particular situation need to be shared by the speaker and the hearer (Wierzbicka 1991:45; also, See Section 2.5). Certain linguistic expressions are set to be used in some specific social situations and they create expectations about the type of exchange that they are used in. These are labelled and each label assigns a function to each expression. Its use is then turned into a social institution. Therefore, the claim is that '(...) the formation and spreading of assumptions about how certain expressions are generally used in conversation is an important part of the process of institutionalization of uses of language (...)' (Žegarac, 1998:14).

Compliments and refusals are institutionalised speech acts. Institutionalised acts are created by explicit performative utterances (Searle 1996). They tend to be produced in a direct manner but the responses to these speech acts often reflect some degree of routinisation, responses that are socially expected and socially accepted, rather than being sincere and serious. For instance, a positive response to a compliment may be an expression of the speaker's sincere appreciation or merely an indication of the speaker's willingness to respond in a socially accepted and expected way. Whether a given response to a compliment is appropriately interpreted in a particular way, depends to a significant extent on the situation in which the compliment is made and on the form of words used in responding to the compliment. Both social situations and forms of words (lexical choices and their combinations) can be institutionalised more or less (in)formally. Thus, Searle (1996) observes:

If people believe that a certain set of relationships in which they are involved is a case of friendship/date/cocktail party, then the possession of each such status is constituted by the belief that the relationship does in fact possess that status, and the possession of that status carries with it certain functions. This is shown by the fact that the people involved have certain sorts of justified expectations from a friendship/date/cocktail party, which they do not have from an identical set of arrangements about which they do not believe that it is a friendship/date/cocktail party. ... If the rights and duties of friendship suddenly became a matter of some grave legal or moral question, then we might imagine these informal institutions becoming codified explicitly, though of course, explicit codification has its price. It deprives us of the flexibility, spontaneity, and informality that the practice has in its uncoded form. (Searle, 1996:88)

Just as types of situation such as ‘cocktail party’ are social institutions, the appropriate production and interpretation of a particular form of words may be institutionalized in that it may be determined by the social situations in which the form of words is used. For example, the question ‘How are you?’ is standardly used as (part of) a greeting (rather than being a request for detailed information about the hearer’s wellbeing), and the answer ‘Fine. Thanks’ is standardly used as a reply to this question (rather than being necessarily a sincere answer to the speaker’s question). According to Sperber (1996:30) institutionalisation involves the formation and spreading of higher order representations. These describe lower level representations and conditions for their use and distribution. The linguistic expressions, such as *How are you?*, are lower order representations, but the knowledge of how these are used is described in terms of higher order representations. The use of expression *How are you?*, as used in phatic communication, requires higher order representations (i.e. social knowledge) about how strings of words such as *How are you?* are produced and interpreted in phatic communication (see Žegarac, 1998), as an institutionalised use of language.

Clearly, compliments and refusals are speech acts which are institutionalised to some extent. When it is appropriate to make a compliment and what is an appropriate compliment object in social situation is something that the members of a speech community tend to be aware of. This knowledge may be more or less intuitive, but it involves higher level representations about how particular forms of words involved in complimenting, responding to a compliment, refusing and responding to a refusal are appropriately used and how they are meant to be interpreted.

The conventional use of refusals seems then more complex and refusals can be institutionalised situations where the request being responded to is perceived as very inappropriate for one reason or another (e.g. due to the high level of imposition, such as an offer to have a tattoo or a request for someone to donate their kidney for a transplant. In other situations, people can agree to do things only because it is socially unacceptable to make a refusal due to the expected level of solidarity with others. Some specific reasons for making a refusal seem to be considered more valid than others, e.g. refusing due to family obligations. A range of 'socially approved' excuses seems to be a rather unspoken rule where it is difficult to assess the comparative importance of two courses of action (e.g. attending a second cousin's wedding or a friend's birthday party). In such situations, the solution generally depends on some very specific aspects of the context (e.g. the kind of personal relationship between the speaker and the second cousin), but the decision is generally seen as a very personal matter for the speaker. Therefore, the emotions associated with each refusal are also different depending on the details of the aspects of the situation-specific aspects of the context.

Social knowledge about compliments and refusals as institutionalised speech acts may vary (sometimes in subtle but communicatively significant) ways not only between relatively distant cultures (such as those of England and China), but also between relatively proximate cultures (such as those of England and Poland). An important aim of the present study is to bring to light the similarities and the differences between complimenting and refusing in England and Poland.

## 2.4 Rationale

The speech acts of compliment and refusal were paired for the investigation presented in this thesis because they can be plausibly characterized as opposites in terms of emotional/affective responses that they tend to generate in the communication process. Compliments are associated with positive, and refusals with negative, emotional valence. The term ‘emotional valence’ is related to motivational aspects of human behaviour. It describes the way an individual evaluates a situation and judges his emotional experience (see Lewin 1935, Lewin 1951, Charland 2005a, 2005b, Shuman et al. 2013). Emotions are categorized into those with positive and those with negative valence (see Lewin, 1951). Compliments are associated with positive emotional valence (such as attractiveness) and refusals with negative emotional valence (such as aversiveness). The empirical part of the study investigates whether and to what extent this generalization about compliments and refusals is found in the two cultures under investigation, whether there are cross cultural differences between emotional valence and complimenting/refusing behaviour, and how these differences relate to the linguistic and cognitive aspects of the situations of communication in which compliments and refusals are made and responded to. This study discusses linguistic realisations of compliments and refusals, i.e. words and phrases used to produce and respond to these two speech acts. The responses are collected mainly through written DCTs (see Chapter 5 and 6 and Appendices 1 and 2). As the study required eliciting specific speech acts from two culturally different groups of respondents and the type of data collection traditionally associated with speech acts research, i.e. DCTs (see Section 5.2 for rationale of selecting written DCTs over naturally occurring conversations) suprasegmental features are not considered in the discussion, not even in the consideration of the spoken data, in order to ensure consistency in the analysis of the findings). The emotions associated with compliments and refusals are discussed on the basis of participants’ subjective impressions of the situations that they responded to when completing DCT scenarios. These impressions were conveyed by stating how

each of the situations made the participant feel (see Appendices 1 and 2 for the examples of scenarios and Chapter 6 for the discussion of the findings).

## **2. 5 Compliments**

Compliments are among the most researched speech acts in various cultures and languages (e.g. Barnlund and Araki 1985: Japanese and American compliments; Creese 1991: American and British English compliments; Lorenzo-Dus 2001: British and Spanish compliments). There are several studies investigating English and Polish compliments and compliment responses, some of which are comparative (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1989, Herbert 1991). The findings of these studies can be usefully compared with the findings of the present study (see Chapter 6 and 7).

The widespread interest in this speech act comes from its functions and positive connotations associated with compliments. Compliments are traditionally associated with positive emotions such as happiness and joy and are part of positive politeness strategy, a social strategy aimed at creating bonds between people and maintaining solidarity (Manes and Wolfston, 1981).

Compliments can also build and strengthen social relationships due to their function as ‘social lubricants’ (Holmes, 1988: 486). This means that people tend to compliment others to make them feel appreciated and generally better.

### **2.5.1 Brief definitions**

Several definitions of compliments are found in the literature. Only a few of these are considered here. Compliments are speech acts that ‘attribute to the person addressed some credit for his/her possessions, characteristics, skills, etc., which are positively valued by both interlocutors’ (Holmes, 1988:445 in Lubecka 2000: 196). They can be ‘both direct and indirect utterances expressing the speaker’s

positive opinion about the addressee's outward appearance, work, personality traits, possessions, and about third parties closely related to the addressee (e.g. children)' (Jaworski 1995: 64).

Cross-cultural research on compliments has established that they 'vary from culture to culture in terms of acceptable or preferred compliment topics (or compliment objects), and yet within a culture or speech community, there is strong agreement as to the relative importance of compliment topics' (Cheng 2003: 25). Compliments generally tend to focus on appearance, achievements, skills and possessions. The importance of these topics varies from culture to culture, so the findings are likely to be highly sensitive to (a) the time at which the research data is collected (because the focus of compliments may change over a relatively short time span), (b) the participants of in the exchange (female to female, male to male, mixed gender), (c) the social status differential of the participants (power and distance) and (d) the focus of the study. Jaworski's (1995) study showed that Polish compliments in the 1980s tended to focus on possessions. This, Jaworski argues, is due to the lack of goods in Poland at that time, so any nice and outstanding commodities (like branded clothes or perfume) were attracting attention and prompting compliments. Compliments were not necessarily sincere, i.e. they were often made not to express admiration (e.g. new jeans) but to elicit (more or less covertly) more information (e.g. where the complimentee had bought the jeans). The sincerity of compliments is discussed in more detail in Section 2.5.4b. In contrast to Polish people in the 1980s, British people have a preference for compliments on abilities (Creese, 1991). Anthropological observations of British compliments by Fox (2004) found differences between male-to-male and female-to-female compliment topics. Females' compliments focus on appearance, whereas males' compliments (if they are made at all) tend to focus on achievements (see Section 2.5.4 below for more details on previous research on English and Polish compliments).

### 2.5.2 Functions

Two main functions of compliments have been identified in previous research:

1) Compliments as ‘social lubricants’ (Holmes, 1988:486) are used:

- ‘to increase or consolidate the solidarity between the speaker and the addressee’ (Holmes, 1984)
- ‘to make the hearer feel good by creating a mutual atmosphere of kindness and good will. They also tend to positively affect the speaker’ (Lubecka 2000: 67)
- to create or maintain rapport (Wolfson 1983:86, Manes 1983:97)
- to straighten or replace other speech acts such as apologies, thankings, greetings; and softening criticism, or even sarcasm.

2) Other functions: to achieve goals, such as:

- getting the complimentee to do something for the complimenter, which is not social because the intention is to reinforce the complimentee’s behaviour desirable to the complimenter (without the making the complimentee aware of this goal). For instance, complimenting someone on a cake that they have just baked may be a way of manipulating them into accepting later to help the complimenter (learn how to) bake the cake.
- exploiting solidarity and satisfying the speaker’s goals (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1989). In such cases, the compliment is used as a *pre-act* to prepare the ground for another act, termed *proper-act* (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1989), e.g. a request, as in the baking-a-cake example (above), where the compliment is made first to praise someone’s baking skills and is then followed by the request for assistance in baking the cake. In this case the complimenter is mainly interested in potential personal benefit
- satisfying the hearer’s goals: ‘to make the addressee feel good by saying something nice to him/her, in this way possibly satisfying the addressee’s



expectations rather than expressing a positive judgement for a referential or informative reason, as may be the case with other types of positive assessment sequences' (Lewandowska- Tomaszczyk, 1989: 75).

Compliments can also function as other speech acts, such as apologies, greetings and congratulations (See Manes and Wolfston, 1981) or be used to 'soften' other face-threatening acts, such as criticism or apology.

Although complimenting is generally a positive politeness (solidarity) strategy which involves seeking approval and appreciation, it can also be negative. For instance, compliments that are too personal may easily threaten the complementee, who may not be comfortable with the level of intimacy shown by the complimenter (see Spencer-Oatey, 2004: 18). This can be very subjective as each person has a different assessment of what counts as too personal or too explicit. 'Giving a compliment presupposes a certain *familiarity* with the addressee, which, if not shared with him/her, results in a "misfire"' (Lewandowska- Tomaszczyk, 1989:75). This is often followed by a feeling of embarrassment. This feeling is conveyed verbally by expressing disagreement with the compliment or downgrading the compliment response (Lewandowska- Tomaszczyk, 1989). This issue is revisited in Chapter 7 in the discussion of the results of this study in reference its aims (see Chapter 5) regarding the linguistic expressions of emotions associated with compliments and refusals.

Compliments can also be used to further the speaker's private, personal, goals by manipulating the hearer (say, in order to get her/him to do something that is desirable to the speaker, without taking responsibility for making a request and in this way accepting to be in the hearer's debt). For example, a communicator who says: *This cake recipe is lovely. I wish I could try it out one day*, indirectly communicates her/his request that the hearer give her/him the cake recipe, but she/he may also be hoping that the hearer will offer to make the cake for her/him or offer to show her/him how to make the cake.

Compliments may also make the addressee feel uncomfortable by conveying the impression that the complimenter is envious of the complementee. A compliment

may easily present a threat to the complimentee's negative face. In some cultures (e.g. some East African societies), a compliment about the hearer's personal possessions is standardly interpreted as an expression of the speaker's desire to have the object complimented on and puts the hearer under obligation to offer it to the speaker as a gift. This is an extreme case of a culture in which a compliment may make a major imposition on the hearer and, therefore, present a threat to the hearer's negative face. However, the point is quite general: in many cultures in everyday situations the compliment may put the complimentee in an awkward position. For example, following a lecture by a very well-known academic a junior colleague wants to compliment her/him on the lecture. In this situation the status differential between the participants may make it difficult for the junior colleague to find the right form of words to make the compliment without seeming to patronize the complimentee.

Compliments are often expected in certain social situations and are made automatically, as it were. This makes their sincerity questionable (see [Section 2.5.4b](#) for more details on the concept of 'sincerity' of compliments). For instance, in paying compliments to a bride on her wedding day and praising her bridal beauty by saying, e.g. *You look so beautiful!* or *You are the most beautiful bride I have ever seen*, the complimenter is fulfilling a social expectation (i.e. [convention](#), see [Section 2.3](#)), rather than making a sincere comment on the bride's appearance. Of course, the interpretation would be very different if the social occasion is evidently not going according to plan in some relevant respect. For example, the same compliment would be understood as ironical if uttered seconds after a small accident left the bride's dress covered with red wine and a cream cake.

### **2.5.3 Classification**

This study follows the classifications of compliments established in previous research by a number of authors with modifications made to accommodate the data collection needs specific to this project.

### a) Making compliments: Types of Compliments

The most commonly used types of compliment are implicit (indirect) compliments, e.g. *Is this a new shirt?* or *I could eat all of these biscuits* (Implication: *I compliment you on the biscuits*) and explicit (direct), e.g. *This new haircut really suits you*. The directness/indirectness of compliments is related to whether the compliment object is referred to explicitly. Complimenting someone on their haircut is directly related to their appearance (i.e. directly related to the person being complimented), unlike complimenting someone on their baking skills by referring to the products of their use of those skills. This compliment is more indirect, because it requires more interpretation to arrive at the intended meaning and it does not necessarily create a direct link between biscuits and someone's baking skills but may imply a request to get a recipe, provide information that someone is hungry or that they just like biscuits in any shape or form and may not think of the person who baked them but only of the baked goods.

Explicit compliments are realised through institutionalized phrases and words, such as *What a lovely... (dog)*, *I like your... (shoes)* or *This ... (haircut) really suits you*. Implicit compliments are more difficult to observe and require more complex interpretation in context. They are often misinterpreted or dismissed due to the complimentee's difficulty in accessing the contextual assumptions in which the complimenter intended the utterance to be interpreted. For example, an utterance intended as an implicit compliment may easily be mistaken for an inadvertent expression of jealousy: *I wish I could play as well as you do*, *Where did you get your shoes from?*. In this case the meaning can often be determined by considering suprasegmental features, such as stress or raising intonation which can indicate a question or irony. This does not make these expressions unambiguous, because the interpretation still depends on the context of situation. This study, however, looks at the linguistic (including lexical semantic) features of compliments in relation to context and emotions, rather than aiming to provide descriptions of the performance of compliments. The level at which the pragmatic analysis is carried out does not call for such detailed descriptions, but it is

important to acknowledge that the interpretation of utterances of both compliments and refusals is guided and informed by suprasegmental features. This is something that should be considered in detail in future research on compliments.

## **b) Compliment Responses**

Pomerantz (1978) was the first to study compliment responses (in American English), proposing a taxonomy of compliment responses with a three-way division: acceptances, rejections and self-praise avoidance. Pomerantz attributes the form of compliment response in American English to two conflicting principles:

- 1) agree with your conversational participant,
- 2) avoid self-praise.

The two principles potentially fall under the Solidarity Principle (first mentioned in this context by Brown and Gilman, 1960), based on confirmation of solidarity with the speaker 'by agreeing with that speaker's assertion and by avoiding/negating self-directed praise, which would attribute a higher status to the complimented speaker' (Oleksy, 1989: 23), e.g.

Speaker 1: Your typing speed is very impressive

Speaker 2: Fast, but you should see all the errors.

In this example, Speaker 2 accepts 'the compliment assertion of Speaker 1, but then he negates/ lessens the praise offered by highlighting his typing inaccuracy' (Oleksy *ibid*). Oleksy (*ibid*) also offers an example of a prototypical response that follows the Solidarity Principle: *So do you*.

Pomerantz (1978) identified the most common strategies in compliment responses: acceptances (agreements), e.g. *Thank you, I like it too*, rejections (disagreements/ nonacceptances), e.g. *I don't think it suits me*, and self-praise

avoidance mechanisms (upgrades and downgrades, referent shifts: return, reassignment):

- *It really brings up the colour of my eyes, doesn't it?* (upgrade)
- *Thanks, but it's actually quite old* (downgrade)
- *Thanks, I like yours, too* (return)
- *Thank you but it's actually a good design, rather than my slim figure* (reassignment)

These strategies have been categorized into several groups according to frequency of usage. The most common compliment response strategies according to Pomerantz (1978) are: thanking (accepting, expressing gratitude), agreeing (attending to the complimenter's positive face), expressing gratitude, joking (a positive politeness strategy, because it appeals to the solidarity and in group membership of the interlocutors, although it seems to challenge the compliment), thanking and returning the compliment, encouraging (the complimenter to do or get something as well), offering the object complimented on to the complimenter, explaining, doubting, and rejecting.

All of the above strategies in compliment responses, with the exception of agreement, fall under the Solidarity Principle. Acceptance responses, such as agreement (e.g. *Thank you, it's my favourite coat*), do not avoid self-praise and, therefore, the complimentee does not establish solidarity with the complimenter. Lewandowska- Tomaszczyk (1989) suggests that the term 'solidarity' needs to be modified for Polish and British English data and described as 'solidarity negotiation', as the exchanges are based on attempts to achieve solidarity, but it is often unclear whether this has actually been achieved in a given conversational interaction.

For the purpose of this study, Pomerantz's (1978) basic three-way categorization of responses to compliments into accepted and rejected was adopted as it seemed reasonably adequate for describing and systematizing the data. **This classification is open to discussion depending on the nature of responses collected in the study**

(see Section 6.2 for the data classification used in this study). Compliments can be accepted or rejected, but neither of these responses is risk free. If you accept a compliment, you run the risk of being perceived as lacking modesty and in this way damaging your positive face. If you reject a compliment, you run the risk of threatening the complimenter's positive face as well as your own (by showing lack of appreciation for the complimenter's judgement and the complimenter's positive social attitude towards you).

Compliment responses are often categorized into preferred and dispreferred. Compliment acceptance and appreciation are preferred as responses to compliments, whereas, rejection, lack of appreciation and ignoring the compliment are perceived as dispreferred responses.

#### **2.5. 4 Previous Research**

This section considers English and Polish compliments based on previous research and gives a description of compliments which provides the basis for comparison with the data collected for the present study (Chapter 6 and 7).

##### **a) English Compliments**

It has been argued that English compliments tend to reflect aspects of the English culture in being implicit and non-specific, i.e. vague, with no attention to detail (Fox, 2004). According to Wierzbicka (1985, 1991) native speakers of English (she refers in her research to British English speakers) are very fond of understatements and this is also reflected in complimenting behaviour. The English communication style tends to be indirect and this tendency is also visible in the ways emotions are expressed. Happy or angry, English people tend to keep their feelings to themselves or express them in a tight circle of people they are comfortable being with (see e.g. Wierzbicka 1991, Fox 2004). They will say things that they may not necessarily mean and keep their real feelings for themselves as they have a preference for not hurting or offending others, or putting them under emotional strain. Wierzbicka (1991:45) also mentions that,

although understatements are common among the speakers of English, there are some stereotypical exclamations such as: *How lovely!* or *Isn't it lovely!* that are very often used in spoken English (stereotypical exclamations in English and Lithuanian are discussed in more detail by Drazdauskiene, 1981). According to Wierzbicka:

(...) The English understatement applies to spontaneous opinions and feelings, not opinions or feelings which are presumed to be shared. The stereotypical exclamations discussed by Drazdauskiene typically express enthusiastic appreciation for something which the speaker presumes to be shared by the address. They often sound exaggerated and insincere, and they certainly don't sound dogmatic. The speaker is not bluntly stating his/her own view, disregarding any potential dissent; on the contrary, he (or according to a stereotype, she) is eager to agree with the addressee. (Wierzbicka, 1991: 45).

This agreement can be expressed using interrogative form, such as: *Isn't that lovely?* or a symmetrical question asking for confirmation that follows an explanation: *How lovely! Isn't that lovely?* The interpretation of utterances like these may also be guided by intonation (see Section 2.5.3a).

Indirectness in English is often mentioned (usually through a comparison with other languages) based on heavy restrictions on the use of the imperative mood (Wierzbicka, 1991:30). Imperatives tend to be seen as direct and their use in English is mostly confined to commands and orders. When used in everyday speech they are often combined with interrogatives to minimise face threat. Whereas, in Polish imperatives are widely used in various contexts when they are not meant as orders or commands but, e.g. advice (Wierzbicka 1991:31): *Ja ci radzę, powiedz mu prawdę* (*I advise you: tell him the truth*). This is perfectly polite in Polish. The same advice in English would be formulated more tentatively: *If I were you I would tell him the truth* (ibid). In Polish, this kind of tentativeness would be interpreted as hesitant and lacking of conviction, giving the hearer the wrong idea about what the speaker's attitude towards the propositional content of the utterance is. The directness of the interrogative form

used in Polish is often softened by means of diminutives to imply a certain emotional attitude (Wierzbicka, 1991:51-52). This is used for instance with names, e.g. derivations of a name *Anna* would change depending on context, speaker's attitude and type of relationship/ level of intimacy between interlocutors from more positive: *Ania*, *Anusia* to ones with slightly negative connotation: *Anka*. The application of these in relation to emotions associated with compliments and refusals are discussed in the data analysis (Chapters 6 and 7).

Compliments are traditionally associated with positive emotions, but emotions are seldom expressed explicitly in English culture. Because of a preference for indirectness English speakers also tend to use self-praise avoidance mechanisms in response to compliments (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1989). This socio-cultural convention that self-praise should be avoided and that agreeing with the speaker is desirable are strong among English speakers, but, according to the comparative study by Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (1989), they are even more strongly held among Poles. The reason for this may be the 'conviction that a compliment can be made first of all when the speaker discovers an *unusual* property with the addressee. However, this may entail a proposition that this property is an irregularity in the addressee - a consequence which may not be flattering' (Lewandowska- Tomaszczyk, 1989: 76).

## **b) Polish Compliments**

The tendency to avoid self-praise and agree with the speaker is widely observed among Polish speakers who often use compliments only in a situation of a major change, e.g. in a person's appearance. Polish people tend to be more verbally expressive than the English. According to Wierzbicka (1991:44), in contrast to English speakers, speakers of Polish tend to overstate their utterances for emphasis rather than using understatements. This is reflected in their use of compliments and refusals, which tend to involve comparatively detailed descriptions and (often several) reasons for refusing.



Wierzbicka (1991/2003) pointed out that Polish people tend to express a whole load of emotions, regardless of whether they are positive or negative. If they are happy, they will show it, but if they are not they will not restrain themselves from moaning and complaining. This value is associated with the linguistic communication of emotions, in utterances such as: *I want to say what I feel*, which may introduce reports of either good or bad feelings (Wierzbicka 2003:121). Czernawska (2009) discusses the psychology of positive aspects of communication in the case of compliments (in general terms as well as in relation to the Polish culture). She claims that nowadays compliments do not have 'good reviews' and that there is a general association of compliments with flattery. Compliments make complimentees suspicious about the sincerity of the complimenters' intentions. They make people uncomfortable and are treated as something unnatural to the extent that their use is perceived as funny. This is related to the conventionalized use of compliments discussed in Section 2.3.

Czernawska (2009) also describes situations where people find complimenting unnecessary, when something is obvious (obvious values or achievements tend not to be complimented on, as people think there is no need to make a compliment because the possession of the property complimented on is mutually known to the participants):

A) My daughter is a great cook.- My neighbour told me.

B) Have you ever told her that?- I asked.

A) What for? Everyone can see that.

Czernawska (2009) uses an analogy between compliments and gifts, pointing out that a compliment can be a gift of words and returning a compliment counts as returning a gift to make the positive nature of the compliment more convincing. This also relates to the conventional use of compliments and phatic utterances, where compliments are used to perform their social functions (e.g. establishing

rapport between the interlocutors, rather than being interpreted on the basis of the meaning of words used.)

In Polish, the expected reply to a question about the source of a personal possession ('Where did you get those shoes from?') is information about the source of the compliment object. For example:

A. And where did you get shoes like that?

B. I got them [from someone]

is likely to be treated as compliment-compliment response. Compliments such as *And where did you get shoes like that?* may also be treated as requests for information. Jaworski (1995) describes Polish compliments as overt expressions of admiration using many questions asking for more information about compliment objects: 'Where did you get shoes like that?', where the speaker expresses appreciation of the addressee's possession and at the same time elicits information which may be useful in obtaining a similar item. (...) this two-fold goal can be realized either by asking a direct question about the source of a possession (as an implicit compliment), or by offering an overt compliment and eliciting the desired information indirectly' (Jaworski 1995: 67)

Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (1989) classifies questions like these as *pre-compliments*. Polish speakers do not seem to establish and maintain solidarity with each other by relying on formulaic speech patterns (which are often interpreted literally). This is reflected in expressions used by Polish speakers of English who treat English greetings (*How are you?*) as insincere because they interpret the expression literally (as a request for information about the hearer's wellbeing) rather than as an informal greeting. The same holds for compliments. As Jaworski (1995) observes: 'Polish speakers often treat compliments with suspicion. The ritualistic, solidarity negotiating function of compliments is often denied, commented on and joked about.' (Jaworski 1995: 69). This author labels these expressions 'empty compliments', compliments used only to please the addressee, as opposed to 'genuine compliments' which are sincere and are used genuinely to praise the addressee, rather than being mere formulaic tokens of

solidarity. Compliments are often described as ‘empty’ when they are used only to fulfil their phatic function (see Section 2.3 for more information on institutionalised speech acts) and the evidence presented by their linguistic meanings is not the main focus of the interpretation. Therefore, these types of compliments (that are meant to have the social function of establishing a bond between interlocutors) are often perceived as insincere by Polish speakers. ‘Empty compliments’ are in many Polish speakers’ opinions conventional expressions which satisfy a social expectation or are part of small talk (See Section 2.3) rather than expressions of the speaker's sincere, genuine, admiration. Therefore, the interpretation of these is often based on the hearer’s interpretation of the speaker’s intention when making the compliment, which is often seen in negative terms as nosiness or jealousy, rather than praise of the addressee or concern with the way the compliment makes them feel (see also Section 4.7). Sincerity is one of the cultural values described as ‘avoidance of being false to any man through being true to one’s own self (Trilling, 1972:5), This concept seems to be very confusing to people when taking into consideration for instance small talk in English culture and social expectations associated with it. When saying *How are you?* to a person, the expected answer, as part of convention, is a positive response (e.g. *I’m fine*). Non-native speakers of English find it very limiting and confusing, and, therefore, would perceive English people as ‘insincere’. They would like to have the freedom to say what they want to say according to the formula provided by Wierzbicka (above) rather than using a prescribed response which may not reflect faithfully the way they actually feel. The speaker's intention in producing a speech act seems crucial for the way it is interpreted and for the emotional impact it has on the hearer(s). Therefore, Wierzbicka’s (ibid) thoughts on perception of sincerity are as follows:

It is not a question of never saying that one feels something that one doesn’t feel; rather, it is a question of knowing what one really feels (including feelings that reveal something bad about oneself) and of being able to disclose those real feelings (especially those which show something bad about oneself) “to the world”. Every human being is unique, and uniquely interesting because of this. We shouldn’t try to

appear “good” to other people. Rather, we should reveal “to the world” our uniqueness, and this involves, above all else, our “badness”: because our “badness” is more original and more interesting than our “goodness”. (Wierzbicka, 1991:117).

In other words, it is often good to break the convention to show the reality of the way people feel about certain events. If the production and reception of every speech act was about following a prescribed convention it would have been difficult to carry out an interesting piece of research. It is important to look for exemptions from these conventions to get the real impressions about speech acts. Trying to avoid confrontation that is associated with disturbing harmony in an interpersonal relationship and refraining from making an imposition is good for social relationship but not necessarily beneficial for interlocutors’ wellbeing and the actual feelings that they have about events.

For these reasons it is very important to investigate emotions that people associate with speech acts to gain a better understanding of the way conventions work and how these conventions are perceived by people from different cultures. This study is unique in this way and it has a potential to make a valuable contribution to understanding affective factors in relation to communication.

The distinction between ‘empty’ and ‘sincere’ compliments often lies in the relationship between interlocutors and the social expectation of a hearer towards a speaker who makes a compliment. When a hearer knows someone who notoriously makes compliments to achieve other goals, the interpretation that he/she will reach for when being in contact with this person is that a compliment is not genuine because there is some hidden agenda behind it. In a situation when someone compliments others on everything regardless of whether this is appropriate in the situation the compliments are likely to be perceived as insincere. The ‘sincerity’ of compliments seems to be context dependent and it is based on the relationship between interlocutors and the situation they are used in. This often leads to questioning compliments and dismissing them by the hearer. Therefore, speakers often have to repeat a compliment or actually say that it was not an empty compliment to emphasize their sincerity. They often make a direct

statement that what they mean is a compliment to avoid misunderstanding. In an example given by Jaworski (1995: 69) F and M who are married and are at a dinner compliment the hostess:

F: *This is really delicious, Ania.*

M: *This is not an empty compliment!*

In this utterance, M seems to be aware of a potential interpretation of a compliment as insincere or superficial and feels the need to emphasize that the praise is 'genuine' rather than being a token of solidarity only because making a compliment is a matter of social expectation in this type of a situation. Jaworski (1995) also observes that this compliment can be more appropriately interpreted as an expression of gratitude for taking time to prepare the food, rather than a token of solidarity that seem to be to highly valued in Polish society (also see Herbert 1989).

According to Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (1989:93) the sincerity of Polish compliments is also related to the fact that they often function, and are assumed to function, not as acts of positive evaluation but as *pre-acts of proper acts*, such as requests and questions (pre-requests and pre-questions). In such cases the addressee recognizes immediately the implicitly conveyed message and uses discourse shortcuts to respond, not to the propositional content of the utterance, but to the implicitly conveyed message, revealing the speaker's goal (see examples below).

#### Examples

1)

Speaker: I could eat all these biscuits.

(Implied message: I compliment you on the biscuits.)

Addressee: Oh, thank you.

(The message was interpreted as a compliment)

2)

Speaker: I could eat all these biscuits.

(Implied message: I compliment you on the biscuits and/or I would like to have some more and/or I would like you to give me your recipe)

Addressee: But please do. May I offer you some more?

(The message was interpreted as a request).

Polish people express solidarity by gestures and non-verbal reinforcements, rather than using linguistic formulas (e.g. formulaic compliments). However, as Jaworski (1995) observes:

This is not to say that solidarity among close friends in Poland is not maintained verbally at all. It certainly is, but the basis for this is again the exchange of 'goods', i.e. information, personal secrets and details (e.g. one's financial standing), gossip about other people, plans to travel abroad (...) (Jaworski 1995: 70)

The preference for expressing solidarity through non-verbal exchanges rather than the use of phatic expressions is often shown explicitly, by people actually saying that the compliment is meant genuinely: *I mean it, this is not just a compliment. OR I really think the food was lovely. This is not just an empty compliment* as a form of reassurance that their intentions are good and the compliment is genuine. This has been described as denying the complimentary nature of the positive comment, only stating facts. Therefore, Grice's (1975; 1989) Maxim of Quality is not violated. According to Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (1989) this is an accepted feature of Polish compliments.

If the compliment (e.g. *This dress looks really nice on you. I mean it. This is not just a compliment*) had been left unqualified it could have been interpreted in terms of its social function rather than by building the interpretation on the actual meanings of the words used. This tendency raises a cultural issue concerning the nature of compliments in Polish culture. Compliments between close relatives and

friends do not need to be expressed explicitly, **often a gesture of appreciation is enough, e.g. accepting an invitation to dinner or asking for a second helping instead of explicitly saying how tasty the food was.** The value of the compliment is also not especially significant. Between people who know each other compliments are not necessarily important for maintaining the relationship or solidarity, although they are important in this way when participants are strangers (also discussed by Czernawska, 2009).

Question responses to compliments tend to be interpreted as non-agreement in Poland . As Jaworski observes: ‘..., after the QUESTION RESPONSE the speaker reframes their original comments from ‘compliments’ to ‘stating the truth’.’ (Jaworski 1995: 71), as in the example of the question-response to a compliment below (Jaworski 1995: 70-71):

- A:     Elegant Dress.  
B:     Is this just a compliment?  
A:     No, it’s the truth.  
B:     I’m glad you like it.  
A:     You are always lucky to find things that look so nice on you.

Question response is an ambiguous compliment response type (Herbert 1989). It can also be interpreted as an agreement which afterwards seeks a confirmation from the hearer **or, as Jaworski (1995) puts it, reinforces the desired behaviour, i.e. a compliment;** or it can be a disagreement where the force of the compliment is challenged.

Calling people ‘habitual compliment-givers’ (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1989) is a very common reaction to a compliment in Polish, because ‘(...) compliments offered as “tokens of solidarity” and not as “gifts of praise” are not very highly valued among Poles’ (Jaworski 1995: 72). For instance, saying to someone *You look nice today* with the intention to make someone feel better, or to open a conversation would often be misinterpreted and interpreted very literally. The potential response to such a compliment could be: *So, are you trying to say that I*

*only look nice today?* The phatic use of compliments seems to be dismissed as insincere and is often not appreciated. Instead, the compliment is questioned and rejected. Therefore, studies on Polish compliments often point out the tendency of Polish speakers to reject compliments, for instance, as a praise-avoidance mechanism rather than discussing the phatic use of compliments in Polish culture. The frequency of compliments given by ‘habitual compliments givers’ mentioned above is usually met with an adverse reaction from the addressee. It creates social distance instead of establishing closer links and can make the interactants feel patronized (Lewandowska- Tomaszczyk, 1989).

Lubecka (2000) claims that ‘compliments are supposed to be an appraisal but sometimes, contrary to their primary function, they express strong criticism, irony, sarcasm, disapproval or reprimand.’ Lubecka (2000: 236) This feature is very common especially in Polish culture, where people use irony and sarcasm on a regular basis. According to Lubecka (2000):

Some Polish speakers, especially women, tend to assign a derogatory meaning even to genuine compliments paid with no other reasons but to please the interlocutor:

A. *You look much nicer now in this new hairdo.*

B. *Do you think that the previous one was bad?*

(Lubecka 2000: 236)

Those types of reactions to compliments are often seen as weird, bizarre and confusing.

- Lubecka (2000): Polish people tend to pay compliments to people they already know (rather than strangers)<sup>1</sup>,
- Lubecka (2000): Poles use compliments as intimacy building devices, manifest personal and genuine interest, warm and good friendly feelings towards others. Emotional intensity of compliments is directly proportional to the degree of intimacy between the interlocutors.

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<sup>1</sup> This may relate to the tendency to interpret compliments literally rather than through their solidarity functions) or use them as ice-breakers in interaction with strangers



A common way of accepting compliments is rejection, due to the common fear of accepting a compliment. **Rejecting a compliment is a self-praise avoidance mechanism.** This kind of an escape reaction or attack is habitual and treats compliments as being insincere and not reflecting the real feelings of the addressee. Often researchers bring down the complimenting behaviour and disagreement with compliments to 'fishing for compliments' (Jaworski, 1995; Antas, 2002; Drabik, 2004).

Polish rules of politeness are often in favour of the self-praise avoidance strategy which is expressed by the lack of compliment acknowledgement and often making an offer to please a person (Lewandowska- Tomaszczyk, 1989), as in the example:

Speaker: I could eat all these biscuits.

(Implied message: I compliment you on the biscuits and/or I would like to have some more and/or I would like you to give me your recipe)

Addressee: But please do. May I offer you some more?

The compliment was not acknowledged directly but it was turned into an offer, acknowledgement was implied and expressed in the form of an offer to the speaker to help themselves to more biscuits.

## **2.6 Refusals**

Refusals are face-threatening acts, which makes their investigation from an interdisciplinary perspective very interesting. Research on refusals should draw on insights from linguistics, pragmatics and psychology (e.g. assertive behaviour). However, refusals are the least researched type of speech act. Unlike other speech acts, such as requests, apologies or compliments, refusals have received little attention in interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics and have been studied by only a few researchers (Beebe *et al.* 1990; King and Silver 1993; Beebe and Cummings 1996; Houck and Gass 1996; Liao and Bresnahan 1996; Nelson *et al.*

2002; Felix-Brasdefer 2003; Kwon 2004). The majority of studies on refusals focus on L2 refusals among foreign speakers of English and on their taxonomic classification. So far, there have been no comparative studies on Polish and English refusals have been published, which makes the present study unique.

### **2.6.1 Definitions and Functions**

A refusal is a complex speech act that functions as a response to another speech act, such as an invitation, a request, a suggestion or an offer. Therefore, a refusal is a second-pair part. It does not function independently, but requires another speech act, termed an ‘initiating act’. Refusals are sometimes called ‘reactive acts’ because a refusal is a reaction to another speech act. It is a speech act by means of which the speaker declines to engage in an action proposed by the speaker and requires a fair amount of planning on the part of a refuser:

Because refusals normally function as a second pair parts, they preclude extensive planning on the part of the refuser. And because extensive planning is limited, and because the possibilities for a response are broader than for an initiating act, refusals may reveal greater complexity than many other speech acts. (Gass, Houck 1999:2)

Refusals have been considered as face-threatening acts, since the possibility of offending an interlocutor through the act of refusing is potentially very high and **can** contradict the speaker’s expectations (Eslami, 2010). **The expectation and preferred choices of responses would be explained as determined by face considerations (See Brown and Levinson, 1987) such as avoiding face-threats and face-loss. Therefore, agreements are usually preferred responses to, e.g. invitations and offers, as opposed to disagreements, i.e. refusals.** Refusals can put at risk interpersonal relations between the interlocutors and, therefore, very often require the use of various strategies for mitigating their illocutionary force (the meaning that is conveyed; Brown and Levinson 1978). Possible mitigating

strategies used in refusing include: excuse/reason/explanation, extended reason, willingness, alternative, apology, e.g.:

I'm very sorry (*statement of regret/ apology*) I can't come to your party because I have a wedding in the family that I need to go (*reason for refusal*). I would have come if it wasn't my immediate family (*willingness*). Maybe we can meet next weekend instead (*alternative*).

Various strategies for mitigating the illocutionary force of refusals have been identified. However, they are neither universal nor are they universally applied – they vary across languages and cultures. **The most widely used taxonomy of refusal responses was established by Beebe et al (1990).**

Refusals can be seen as a series of: (1) pre-refusal strategies (i.e. strategies that prepare the addressee for an upcoming refusal), (2) main refusal (i.e. head act that expresses the refusal), and (3) post-refusal strategies (i.e. strategies that follow the head act to justify, mitigate, or conclude the refusal response). (Eslami, 2010: 218).

The main refusal can be expressed directly or indirectly (see Section 2.6.2 for classification of refusals). The post-refusal strategies include a set of mitigating devices that are used to communicate refusal (usually known as 'indirect refusal') or accompany a direct refusal to soften its force. The set of strategies used to communicate refusal includes for **example**: a statement of regret (*I'm sorry...*), excuse/reason/explanation (*I have a headache*), alternative (*I'd rather...*), self-defence (*I'm trying my best*), threat (*I won't be any fun tonight-* used to refuse an invitation), condition/ if (*If you had asked me earlier, I would have...*), gratitude/ appreciation (*Thank you for your offer but...*), hedging (avoiding giving direct answer to a question: *I'm not sure..*), postponement (*I'll think about it*), agreement (*That's a good idea*) to name a few (see Beebe et al, 1990 for more examples). According to Barron (2005) the choice of these strategies depends on contextual factors, such as individuals' personalities and social background which determines a so called 'appropriate' manifestation' of the preferred range of strategies. These strategies play a crucial role in the way refusals are perceived and what emotions

they evoke. Thus, these strategies are considered in this study to draw some conclusions on emotional valence associated with refusals (see below).

The function of various strategies for refusing is to reassure the hearer that he is still approved of and in this way mitigates the threat to the hearer's positive face. Apart from giving a 'good enough' reason for refusing, the speaker may use various negotiation strategies aimed at minimizing the risk of causing offence, such as offering an alternative.

Refusals are dispreferred responses to another speech act (e.g. invitation, request). They are inherently face-threatening and, therefore, associated with negative emotions. The four speech acts which may 'trigger' acceptance or refusal are: offer, request, invitation and suggestion.

A dispreferred response is likely to be avoided by respondents, marked by delays, providing excuses etc. Possible outcomes of refusals in interpersonal communication include:

- offending the interlocutors, especially in intercultural communication, where there are considerable differences in accepting and giving refusals in communication (the way they are addressed and interpreted)
- creating confusion and misunderstanding (for example in the case of indirect refusals which are vague so it is not clear whether a refusal has actually been made)
- threatening face
- seriously damaging or breaking interpersonal communication/relationship.

Refusals can often include explanations or reasons why a refusal is made. Refusal strategies are typically aimed at reassuring the hearer that she/he is still approved of but that there are important/valid reasons for the refusal, and that the refuser regrets the necessity of making the refusal.

Although refusals are traditionally associated with negative emotions, there are situations in which they evoke positive emotions. For example, English

respondents tend to associate a refusal with positive emotions if, in their opinion, the refuser's reason for making the refusal was satisfying ('good enough') and they understand that people may have more important things to do and have to set their priorities, so there are no 'hard feelings' between the interlocutors despite the refusal being made (see Chapter 6 and 7 for more discussion).

## 2.6.2 Classification

### a) Making refusals: types

Refusals are typically classified as direct or indirect. This distinction is important because refusals are face-threatening acts which need to be mitigated by various politeness strategies, and these strategies generally involve communicative indirectness (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984; Gass, Houck 1999). Direct refusals use performative verbs (e.g. *I refuse*) or non-performative statements (e.g. *No* or negative willingness/ability (*I can't./I won't./I don't think so*). Indirect refusals include statements of regret (*I'm sorry.../I feel terrible...*), wish (*I wish I could help you...*), excuse, reason, explanation (*My children will be home that night./I have a headache*), and proposing alternatives (Beebe, Takakashi and Uliss- Weltz 1990; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984; Ewert and Bromberek-Dyzman 2008). Indirect refusals may be more difficult to recognize as they do not follow any specific rules and often may not be understood as refusals at all. Refusals are realized through indirect strategies rather often. This requires a high level of pragmatic competence (Chen, 1996). Being refused may be unexpected for the hearer and, in virtue of this, may make it difficult for him to access all the relevant contextual assumptions for deciding whether and how to refuse. Moreover, while it is often appropriate to refuse tactfully, the refusal should, in most situations, not be so indirect as to leave it unclear whether a refusal has been made or not. Consider the example below in which a reply is open to interpretation as a refusal:

A:     Would you be able to help me with my homework this evening?

B: Didn't you tell me you'd already done your homework?  
(example adapted from Gass and Houck 1999: 6)

Depending on the context in which it is interpreted, B's utterance may, but certainly need not, be taken to imply (i.e. to communicate indirectly) that B is unwilling to help A with her homework. Thus, if A and B are close friends who regularly help each other with the homework, A may be justified in interpreting B's question as a request for explanation motivated by B's existing belief that A had already completed the homework. This example illustrates the possibility of communicating a refusal more or less (in)directly. As Eslami (2010) observes: 'The negotiation of a refusal may entail frequent attempts at directness or indirectness and various degrees of politeness that are appropriate to the situation. Furthermore, what is considered an appropriate refusal may vary across cultures (...)' (Eslami 2010:218). What is considered an 'appropriate' way to refuse is culture (and situation) dependent.

### **b) Types of refusal responses**

Refusals can be accepted or rejected. Acceptance means that the refusal has been acknowledged. A refusal is rejected when the speaker communicates he/she does not consider it a valid response and that he/she does not accept it. **This distinction is commonly adopted in research on refusals and it was discussed in by Gass and Houck (1999: 3-4). Non-acceptance (or rejection) of a refusal is quite complex as it triggers a sort of negotiation before a final outcome is reached, e.g. an alternative (see Gass and Houck, 1999:4-5). The final outcome may not always be mutually satisfactory and the exchange may involve extended face-work (see Section 4.7 for more discussion on a concept of face).**

### **2.6.3 Previous Studies**

One of the earliest comparative studies on refusals was carried out by Rubin (1983). She proposed a taxonomy of refusal strategies which included 9 ways of saying 'no' across cultures, realized by using the following strategies:

- 1) Be silent, hesitate, show lack of enthusiasm
  - 2) Offer an alternative
  - 3) Postponement
  - 4) Put the blame on a third party or something over which you have no control
  - 5) Avoidance
  - 6) General acceptance of an offer but giving no details
  - 7) Divert and distract the addressee
  - 8) General acceptance with excuses
  - 9) Say what is offered is inappropriate
- (Rubin 1983:11-13)

More recently, Beebe et al (1990: 60-70) established a classification of refusal strategies, which is currently one of the most widely used taxonomies. The classification is based on strategies for refusing invitations, requests, suggestions and offers. Refusal responses are categorized into semantic formulas (expressions which can be used to perform refusals) and adjuncts (that cannot be used by themselves but go with refusal strategies). They also categorized refusal strategies into direct (performative and non-performative statements) and indirect (11 semantic formulas). Four types of adjuncts of refusals include statements of positive opinion, pause fillers, gratitude/appreciation (e.g. *Thank you*) or **alterers** (e.g. **friendly address terms**).

#### **2.6.4 English and Polish refusals: characteristics**

This section presents typical features of English and Polish refusals. There are only a few studies on refusals, so establishing the typical features of English and Polish refusals on the basis of previous research is hardly feasible. However, research on refusals from a cross cultural perspective has been growing over the past two decades (Beebe *et al.* 1990; Houck and Gass 1996; Felix-Brasdefer 2003;

Kwon 2004). As Eslami (2010) points out: ‘Overall, the cross- cultural studies on refusals reveal that although different cultures may share similar refusal strategies, the choice of directness, mitigation and the reasons for refusing may vary across cultures’ (Eslami 2010: 221). The following are features associated with refusals considered below.

#### **a) English refusals**

Research on English refusals that would provide some observations about their characteristics seems to be non-existent. Based on the present study data, English refusals tend to be short and concise, where speakers do not go into much detail when explaining their reasons for making a refusal. Usually they focus on providing one mitigating strategy, if any at all, as opposed to Polish respondents who use several devices in one response (see Sections 6.3.2. and 6.4.2). There is a tendency among English respondents to consider giving one reason for making a refusal as ‘good enough’, so they do not go into too much explanation when making the refusal and do not offer extensive apologies.

English culture prefers indirectness, and thus this is reflected in making refusals, as a politeness strategy for avoiding causing offence to an interlocutor.

Despite the lack of studies specifically on English refusals (performed by English native speakers rather than by speakers of English as a second language), there is some research on refusals in English (studies on American culture). The two may share some similarities due to the language that they have in common, although these assumptions may only contribute to the discussion of the findings of this study, rather than making generalisations about the two cultures in a broader perspective. Blum-Kulka (1992) claims that expressing a refusal by saying no *No* is not common in English (this is in reference to Anglo-American culture, rather than English culture in particular). However, Wierzbicka (1991) claims that ‘in English when someone indicates that they want something from us we are free to say *No*, but not to say just *No*’ (Wierzbicka, 1991:92). This expression needs to be followed by something, usually a mitigating strategy, such as apology (see Section 2.6.3).



## **b) Polish refusals**

Polish refusals have received more attention from researchers than English refusals. Three groups of features of Polish refusals have been identified:

- Very apologetic, descriptive, giving long explanations and very often several reasons for not being able to do something
- Very explanatory. This is due to the fact that Polish culture tends to be emotionally expressive (Wierzbicka 2003). Polish people have a tendency to express a whole load of emotions, regardless of whether they are positive or negative. If they are happy they will show it but if they are not they will not restrain themselves from moaning and complaining. They express genuine sadness in situations that upset them or when they have to refuse, even though sometimes the reasons for refusals are out of control.
- Polish people tend not to refuse (often against their own will) or they do it in non-assertive ways by explanations and apologies (Janczak-Galczyńska, 1999).

Galczyńska (2003) described refusals in modern Polish. Her analysis was based on spoken utterances by modern Polish respondents from the 1990s noted during researchers observations and dialogues taken from Polish literature (last 30 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), TV and radio programmes. Examples are used to show patterns and regularities of the use of refusal in the casual use of language. A refusal as an instance of an action- reaction pattern of a communicative exchange: the refusal is a reaction to direct acts (such as requests, offers) and, at the same time, it is a stimulus for the following act, for example:

Speaker 1: Jane, please lend me £20 to pay my phone bill. (*request= action*)

Speaker 2: I don't have any money, Mark. I'm getting paid next week. (*refusal= reaction and =stimulus for Speaker's 1 response*)

Speaker 1: Oh, no! What am I going to do now? (*Speaker's 1 defeat= reaction and asking for advice= action*)

Speaker 2: Why don't you ask mum for a loan? (*advice= reaction*)

(adapted with modifications from Gałczyńska 2003: 152-153)

As mentioned earlier in the consideration of compliments (See Section 2.5), in Polish diminutives are used to soften imperatives which are commonly used. This mitigating device can be also accompany refusals, e.g. *Mareczku* (diminutive form of a name 'Mark' used with a positive connotation), *wybacz ale nie mogę wpaść* (*Mark, forgive me but I can't come*) (See Chapter 6 and 7 for more examples from the collected data).

## 2. 7. Summary

The aim of this chapter is to present an overview of the research field in general (speech acts) and in reference to the research discussed in this thesis in particular (compliments and refusals in English and Polish culture). The chapter has introduced some important concepts (e.g. institutionalisation of speech acts, Section 2.3) including important features of emotions associated with the speech acts of compliment and refusal and to make a case for bringing them together with a cognitive perspective on communication. It has also shed some light on generalisations about emotional valence traditionally associated with compliments and refusals based on examples from the literature which are later compared with the empirical findings of this study (see Chapter 6 and 7). Compliments and refusals are often seen as opposites in terms of reactions that they evoke: compliments tend to be seen as positive and refusals as negative. However, they can be seen as opposites of what they appear. The literature reviewed for this research project has provided examples of face-threatening compliments (see Section 2.5.2) and of refusals associated with positive emotions on the basis of mitigating strategies used to minimise their face-threatening impact on the hearer (see Section 2.6.1). This is an important observation which is worth investigating further, especially because data from previous studies provided many interesting examples of differences in perception of compliments in English and Polish

culture (see Jaworski 1995, Herbert 1989, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1989), and because refusals seen in positive terms are under-researched in both cultures. There are some differences in how English and Polish respondents perceive these two speech acts and how they respond to them, and previous research has provided some insights that are compared with the empirical findings of this study (see Chapter 6 and 7).

Chapter 3 presents an overview of the research on emotions to provide more background for more detailed discussion of emotions associated with compliments and refusals and in order to identify some important links between emotions, communication and culture.

## **Chapter 3: Emotions**

### **3.1. Introduction**

Compliments and refusals are speech acts, which are institutionalized more or less (in)formally through the process of standardization (see e.g. Žegarac, 1998) and are likely to vary across cultures. Standardization is one of two types of institutionalisation (with conventionalisation being the second type) and it refers to the interpretation of an utterance, which seems to go beyond the literal meaning and derive information from contextual knowledge about the way utterances of the type in question are generally used. The speech acts in question are closely associated with positive (compliments) and negative (refusals) emotions (see Chapter 2). People are generally aware of the emotions likely to be associated with the production of compliments and refusals, as well as of their affective-emotional effects on those at whom they are directed. For this reason, a cross-cultural investigation of compliments and refusals needs to address the relation between the linguistic performance of these speech acts and the emotions associated with them.

In Chapter 2, institutionalised speech acts are characterised in terms of higher level representations (i.e. general world knowledge assumptions) about how lower level representations (i.e. more or less fixed lexical choices and their combinations) are used in particular types of situation (see Section 2.3). In other words, speech acts are described in cognitive and linguistic terms. The main difficulty in relating emotions to communication stems from their non-cognitive nature. Whatever emotions are, they are not cognitive, in that they do not have propositional mental content and are not inputs to cognitive (i.e. computational) mental processing. However, emotions obviously have a linguistic aspect: languages have words which are used as labels for particular emotions, and these words are labels for concepts, where a concept is informally defined as a mental address under which encyclopaedic (i.e. general world knowledge) assumptions

about the non-cognitive emotional experiences are stored (See Sperber and Wilson 1995: 38-46 and Carston 2002: 95-116 for detailed information on word meanings from a cognitive as well as a relevance-theoretic perspective). These conceptual tiers of a particular emotion are elaborated in different ways in across cultures. For example, the Japanese emotion ‘amae’ can be described as a set of higher level conceptual representations about a non-cognitive, direct, emotional experience triggered in a particular type of social situation, roughly: the feeling of affectionate satisfaction caused by having been cared for (or otherwise supported) by an older person (Doi 1973 and 1996, Vogel 1996). A major cause of the difficulty in bringing together linguistic communication and emotions in a principled way is that emotions are generally investigated and defined as natural kinds. Researchers have sought to identify some objective (biological, neurophysiological) features that all emotions have in common, as illustrated by the overview of the field of emotions research presented in this chapter. However, as the example of ‘amae’ shows, many, if not all, human emotions are also indelibly associated with conceptual representations. Clearly, cross-cultural research on emotions and speech acts would benefit greatly from an approach to defining and studying emotions which brings together their cognitive and non-cognitive contents. I argue that this issue is plausibly addressed by Griffith’s (1997) perspective on emotions and that the social importance of emotions lies with Frank’s (1988) view of emotions as reliably committing individuals who have them to act in particular ways. **Emotions are useful for investigating speech acts in communication for several reasons:**

- a) We need to know how emotions are conceptualised and this is easier to deal with if we have a reasonably explicit account of word meaning and concepts;
- b) Without (a) we cannot investigate fruitfully how people communicate (about) emotions, within and across cultures;
- c) We need to have an explicit account of the impact of emotions on communication and also on their function in communication (if they have a function and Frank (1988) suggests that they do).

In order to address these points we need to introduce both some important insights into emotions, which is the focus of this chapter, and a psychologically plausible perspective on human communication, which are introduced in Chapter 4.

This chapter provides a brief overview of research on emotions by considering a few ways in which emotions have been defined (Section 3.3). Section 3.4 considers the functions of emotions and Section 3.5 looks at some points of contact between emotion, communication and culture.

## **3.2 Rationale**

Emotions need to be related explicitly to the process of communication because they play a causal role in the production and the interpretation of communicative acts. This chapter presents an overview of research on emotions in relation to the present study. Various insights from previous research (see Section 3.3) are brought together to discuss linguistic realisations of compliments and refusals and the emotions that speakers and hearers associate with them. Emotions tend to be discussed from the psychological perspective rather than through their linguistic realisations and intentions associated with the production of communicative acts. The current research explores the illocutionary and perlocutionary effects (see Section 2.2) of compliments and refusals in some typical everyday life situations (see Chapter 6 for the discussion of the results and Appendices 1-3 for the study design).

The investigation includes:

- a) the impact of a compliment/refusal on the hearer,
- b) linguistic expressions of emotions and
- c) the relation between the speaker's intention when making compliments and refusals and emotions.

The speaker's (perlocutionary) intention relates to the way he/she intends to make the hearer to feel, e.g. happy and appreciated (compliments) or to preserve rapport with the hearer without offending him (refusals). The speaker may also not be bothered about hearer's feelings and only focus on his/her own well being. This relates to the face needs of the speaker and the hearer (See Section 4.7), with compliments and refusal being both potentially face-threatening or face-saving, depending on context. These aspects of investigation are explored in the discussion of the findings in Chapters 6 and 7.

Within philosophy a common point of agreement about emotions is their intentionality (Solomon, 2008). This could be a potential link between emotions and communication. Solomon (2008:12) defines 'intentionality' as a technical notion, whose 'common-sense meaning can be captured by the idea that emotions are always "about" something or other. (...) Thus we can understand the "formal object" of an emotion as its essential intentionality - the kind of object (event, person, state of affairs) to which it must be directed if it is to be that emotion' (Solomon, 2008:12). An 'object' of emotion can also be something abstract or non-existent (or imaginary), e.g. an object of fear may be nowhere to be seen, such as death etc. From this perspective 'intentionality' refers to the object of emotions. When considering emotions in communication, the concept of 'intentionality' can be taken to refer to the relationship between the interlocutors and effect that the speaker has on the hearer because the evidence of the emotional state of the speaker of the hearer is also evidence of what may have caused this emotion, of what the emotion is about.

Predictions of the way the concept of 'intentionality' (see Solomon, 2008: 12) is used by interlocutors based on this study's results include a choice of the responses being influenced by the context available to the speaker and the hearer. The interlocutors' orientation towards informativeness (technically, relevance) and efficiency encourages the speaker to produce the communicative act and allows the hearer to interpret it choosing the least effort- demanding option (see Chapter 4 for more detailed discussion).

### 3.3 Towards defining emotions

Emotions have been studied from various perspectives within various research fields, including anthropology (Erving Goffman, 1971), physiology (medicine: John Harlow, 1993; neurophysiology: Walter Hess, 1950), neuroscience (LeDoux, 1994), psychotherapy (Sigmund Freud, 1920), psychology (Magda Arnold 1960, Sylvan Tomkins 1962, Charles Darwin 1998/1972) and experimental psychology (Alice Isen 2004, Paul Ekman 1972 and Carroll Izard 2010, 2011), philosophy (Aristotle 1941, Rene Descartes 1989 and Baruch Spinoza, 1995), sociology (Arlie Hochschild, 1983) and cultural studies (Heelas 1986, Levy 1984, De Rivera 1992). Understanding of the background of research on emotions is crucial as Oatley and Jenkins (1996) claim that ‘we are unlikely to be able to understand emotions or their significance without paying attention to the multidisciplinary nature of understanding’ (1996: 34).

A brief definition of terms includes a distinction between ‘feelings’ and ‘emotions’. This study is using term ‘emotions’ in the discussion except in places where it was important to refer specifically to ‘feelings’ (defined as expressions of emotions, for the purpose of this study). Both terms are often used interchangeably and described as two sides of the same coin (see Damasio 2004, Solomon 2008, Parrott 2001). Researchers are often skeptical about drawing distinction between them as they believe that the term ‘emotion’ described adequately both ‘emotions’ and ‘feelings’. Parrott (2001) for instance refers to emotions as ‘emotional feelings’. Provisional definitions of these terms were drawn by Damasio (2004: 51-53) who discusses emotions as states (emotional states) that can influence and alter the state of other individuals. Simplifying the process, emotions are produced by stimuli that activate certain brain regions that lead body to carry out certain actions or behaviours (e.g. face expressions). Feelings (in his understanding these are ‘feelings of emotions’) as ‘the mental representation of the physiologic changes that occur during an emotion. The essence of feelings of emotion is the mapping of the emotional state in the appropriate body-sensing regions of the brain’ (Damasio, 2004: 52). Feeling therefore, is ‘a perception of an emotional state, as enacted in the body (...) and



the perception of a certain style of mental processing and the perception of thoughts with themes consonant with the emotion' (ibid). A more detailed discussion of different perspectives on emotions and their definition is presented in Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2.

This section presents the three important aspects of research on emotions:

1. Emotions as bodily responses: the evolutionary perspective
2. Modern definitions of emotions
3. The cognitive perspective on emotions

These three are particularly interesting as they show how research on emotions has changed from emotions being only involved in bodily responses to their impact on people's cognition and communication.

### **3.3.1 Emotions as bodily responses: the evolutionary perspective**

Emotions have been investigated from various perspectives over the centuries. Initially they were explored through bodily responses (by Charles Darwin in 1872). An emotional response was assumed to be related to an activity performed as a reaction to that activity, and emotions were seen as products of evolution, as at least some of them are innate (e.g. the so-called 'basic emotions'). Darwin famously explored this hypothesis by investigating informants' responses to photographs of people with different emotional facial expressions and asking informants about what emotion was conveyed by each of the facial expressions. Darwin also used a network of correspondence worldwide to investigate whether certain emotional expressions (especially those of the 'basic emotions') are similar or identical across cultures. To this end, he used a questionnaire with descriptions of emotional expressions. Researchers nominated by him were asked to answer each question with 'yes' or 'no' and to make comments were they felt this was necessary. He was not in a position to send pictures of emotional expressions that he had used initially, because they were very valuable, so he asked about facial expressions and gestures such as shrugging and blushing

among different cultures through a series of written questions. The document was carefully devised to prevent the feelings of Darwin's remote observers from influencing their descriptions. The observations had already been supplied by Darwin within the body of each question. The questionnaire focused on the following questions:

- a) Are there core emotions? What are they and how many are there?
- b) Why do we express emotion in the way we do?
- c) How do we recognise a particular emotion and can we be sure we all interpret it in the same way? Is the expression of a given emotion fully innately specified, or is it culturally elaborated in different ways?
- d) How do we equate different words to describe emotions (within and across languages)?
- e) Can a static image ever convey emotion accurately?

Darwin's questionnaire for gathering information on the emotional behaviour of non-Europeans was sent to correspondents who were in a position to observe native peoples, or who were in contact with missionaries or travellers. Replies (a series of letters with various notes and observations) were received from South Africa, Ceylon, India, China, North America, and Australia, and Darwin was able to chart the similarities and the variations in peoples' emotional expressions across the globe. The following is a sample question from Darwin's survey:

Q. 6. 'When in good spirits, do the eyes sparkle, with the skin a little wrinkled round and under them, and with the mouth a little drawn back at the corners?' (Darwin, 1872; Darwin Correspondence Project, 2012)

The photographs used initially in Darwin's study portrayed human faces with some muscles artificially contracted by electric probes in the way Darwin thought a particular emotion would be expressed. He wanted to compare his predictions with the responses of his informants to check if they would recognize the emotions that were presented in each photograph and to establish the relation between emotions and facial expressions. His research was aimed at finding evidence of the evolution of the human species.

Darwin's approach was based on theorizing that emotions were universal, rather than culture-specific, and that they were biologically determined reflex-like mechanisms. As Oatley and Jenkins (1996) observe: 'Darwin proposed a taxonomy of emotional expressions, and supposed that each emotion is a discrete state, with an expression by which it can be recognized, sometimes an action, sometimes as in the case of tears or perspiration, a physical event' (Oatley and Jenkins 1996: 106).

According to Darwin's notes, his subjects agreed almost unanimously on certain photographs - those that portrayed fear, surprise, happiness, sadness and anger. This supported the hypothesis that the facial expressions of these basic emotions are universal across cultures.

William James (1890) also associated emotions with physical activity, as illustrated by the example of seeing a bear in the woods: you see a bear, you feel frightened, you run away. According to James, emotions are 'perceptions of the changes in our body as we react to that fact' (Oatley and Jenkins, 1996: 5). In other words, bodily reactions/symptoms are responses to how we feel.

Darwin's study was recreated in 2011/12 using the original images and it was carried out at the University of Cambridge (2011-2012; Darwin Correspondence Project, 2012) by the Darwin Project Group. Their investigation has shown that people had great difficulty recognizing emotions just by looking at static images. According to the findings, basic emotions (like joy or happiness) were easier to distinguish, but more complex emotions (such as agony or grief) were very difficult to recognize by the informants and hardly anyone provided an accurate answer. Complex emotions (such as guilt) also took the longest for informants to describe (which many of them did by giving very different answers). The research raises questions about the plausibility of classifying emotions by looking only at static images of facial expressions. It supported the case for using videos in modern experiments to provide informants with vital additional contextual information, such as tone of voice and body language. The aim of this recent research was to give a sense of what it was like to participate in an experiment in Darwin's days. The interest in the experiment was not so much in the results as in

the process of taking part, and in learning more about the context of Darwin's studies and the methodological problems he faced. One of the problems Darwin faced was whether to suggest possible responses to his participants or to allow them to use their own words. He chose to suggest responses in his questionnaire. The Darwin Project experiment accepted any response from informants, it was carried out on a much larger scale and it used a compromise format developed by the Computer Lab to suggest possible answers drawn from a database, using a version of predictive text. It was made clear that respondents have the freedom to enter whatever they wanted.

As part of the research for this study the researcher took part in the Darwin Project experiment online to find out how my responses would resemble the anticipated ones. By the time the research website was accessed, the official study had finished and the results were already published on the site allowing a comparison of the researcher's responses with those of others. The task was difficult and the researcher found herself reconstructing the expressions from photographs on her own face trying to match them with the emotions that the person from each photograph could have been experiencing. The impression was that the task was very difficult because the context for making judgments was inadequate. The researcher's responses in comparison to the original ones included only two exact matches and one relatively close match, out of eleven photographs that were presented in the task. A complex emotion shown in photograph number 7 as 'half face crying half laughing' was recognized after 51 seconds (whereas the average time for this task was only 16 seconds) and the emotion was described as 'confusion'. That was the only thing that came to the researcher's mind when looking at this photograph. However, it is not clear whether what they described state of mind was this of the researcher or was it her perception of the person in the photograph. This experiment led the researcher to realize that more variables need to be taken into consideration in order to recognize, describe and explain emotions, and that for the purposes of my study informants' perceptions about emotions should be elicited in relation to behaviour in relatively detailed situational settings with which the informants are familiar.

This experiment contributed to the researcher's experience and awareness of the difficulties in collecting good quality data.

Building on Darwin's seminal work, Paul Ekman, famously known as the pioneer of research on emotions and their relation to facial expressions in modern psychology, carried out his research in the 1970s in a remote, preliterate culture, the Fore in New Guinea, in order to make sure that his respondents had no previous contact with/experience of 'Western emotions'. The task used in the study was based on various stories that Ekman (1972) told informants (e.g. coming across a wild pig when alone in the woods). After telling the story he asked the informants to choose from three photographs of Americans expressing various emotions, the one that most closely matched the story. The study resulted in the Fore pointing to the same expressions that Westerners associated with each of the stories. This was interpreted by Ekman (1972) as reliable evidence for the conclusion that some emotions are not learnt, but are universal and innate. As a follow up to this experiment, Ekman asked some of the Fore people to make facial expressions appropriate to each story that they were told before and videotaped them. On returning home he did the experiment in reverse and asked Americans to link the Fore faces from the video film's snapshots to the stories and the results matched. This provided further support for the hypothesis that basic emotions are universal and innate.

Ekman's (1972) research led to establishing emotion labels that fit facial expressions which seem to be universal. These six facial expressions corresponded to 'basic emotions': anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise. This list was extended in the 1990s and included a range of positive and negative emotions that were not necessarily covered by facial expressions, such as: amusement, embarrassment, excitement, guilt, to name a few. Each basic emotion has a distinctive facial expression and for most of them there is evidence of distinctive physiological responses, changes in the voice and evidence of cognitive phenomena like focusing attention on the emotion stimulus. Basic emotions do not contain other emotions as their parts and they are innate, in contrast to emotions which are complex and socially (or culturally) constructed,

such as: jealousy, pride, shame, guilt, embarrassment and envy, are very often described as complex or higher cognitive emotions, and recognizing them requires more processing effort. They are not universally associated with particular facial expressions, and their recognition is not as fast and automatic as that of basic emotions. For example, there is no particular expression associated with love, unlike e.g. joy, which is expressed by a smile. Although, higher cognitive emotions are universal (just like basic emotions), they are more likely to be influenced by conscious thoughts and this allows greater cultural variation in expressing them.

Ekman proposed the ‘affect program’ theory of (basic) emotions. Affect programs are short-term and stereotypical responses to emotional states that involve a series of elements, such as facial expressions and autonomic nervous system arousals associated with specific emotions, such as joy or sadness. The same patterns or responses occur in all cultures and are triggered by the cognitive system. According to Griffiths (1997):

This system learns when to produce emotions by associating stimuli with broad, functional categories such as danger or loss. To do this it uses the organism’s past experience and some specialized learning algorithms which depart substantially from the norms of traditional learning theory. (Griffiths, 1997:8)

These observations seem to support the affect program theory. However, they tend to be applicable only to basic emotions and do not consider higher-cognitive emotions, such as envy or jealousy. The general tendency of theories on emotions is typically to apply them to all emotions and often, leave out the mental states that do not fit the model or label them as non-emotions (e.g. Ekman, 1992). The mental states that do not fit within the model have often been treated as blends of more than one affect program. However, higher cognitive emotions, such as ‘amae’, need a different account due to the affect program theory’s limited scope, rather than being dealt with as omissions that can be easily rectified. These emotions do not fit into the highly stereotyped model (i.e. a model of describing emotions only through bodily changes that they trigger) of emotional reactions

and physiological effects. Yet, these emotions are more integrated with cognitive activity and should be investigated in the context of the ways they are related to cognitive processes. However, this raises the question of whether a unified account of basic emotions and complex emotions can be given. In other words, can basic and complex emotions be characterized explicitly as members of a general category of emotions?

### **3.3.2 Modern definitions of emotions**

Attempts at defining emotions seem to proceed on the assumption that both basic and complex emotions must have some underlying neurophysiological properties in common. These properties would then be the defining features of emotions. For example, Izard (2010) proposes a definition which goes as follows:

Emotion consists of neural circuits (that are at least partially dedicated), response systems, and a feeling state/process that motivates and organizes cognition and action. Emotion also provides information to the person experiencing it, and may include antecedent cognitive appraisals and ongoing cognition including an interpretation of its feeling state, expressions or social-communicative signals, and may motivate approach or avoidant behaviour, exercise control/regulation of responses, and be social or relational in nature. (Izard, 2010: 367)

However, this author does admit that this description is highly complex and it suggests there is some confusion in the way emotions can be defined. Izard's (2010) definition identifies three defining features of emotions: '(a) dedicated neural circuits and neurobiological processes, (b) phenomenal experience or feeling, and (c) perceptual-cognitive processes' (Izard, 2010: 367- 368).

In a response to Izard, Wierzbicka (2010) approaches emotions from a somewhat different perspective. She begins by stating that 'emotion' is an English word and observes that, while all languages have a word for 'feel', they do not necessarily

have a word for ‘emotion’ (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2002). Thus, Wierzbicka (2010) claims that ‘the English word “emotion” imposes a certain language- and culture-specific perspective on human feelings’ (Wierzbicka, 2010:380). This author argues that, although there is nothing wrong with using this word in discussions of human feelings and their bodily correlates, scholars need to remember to acknowledge the cultural complexity of emotional constructs and claims that ‘The question “What is your definition of emotion?” begs the question: “What is your definition of definition?”’ (Wierzbicka 2010: 380). This seems to be the starting point of the discussion. Regardless of how many scholars we ask about their perception of the definition of emotions, we will not solve the problem by voting, as ‘one can only define a word meaningfully through words which are simpler and clearer than the word which is being defined, and ultimately, through words which can be “understood by themselves”’ (Wierzbicka 2010: 380). Therefore, Wierzbicka (2010: 380) stands by her definition of the English word ‘emotion’ used in ordinary English, a definition which she claims is ‘free from such flaws’ (see: Wierzbicka, 1992, 1995, 1999):

*‘emotion*

- a. it can be like this:
- b. someone thinks something at some time
- c. because of this, this someone feels something for some time
- d. at the same time, something is happening somewhere in this someone’s body because of this’ (Wierzbicka 2010: 381)

Wierzbicka’s argument goes as follows: ‘This configuration combines “thinking,” “feeling,” and “bodily happening.” The reference to feelings in this formula is a crucial part of the concept; while some psychologists and philosophers have insisted that “emotions are cognitions,” in ordinary language thoughts would never be referred to as “emotions” (and neither would bodily events as such)’ (Wierzbicka 2010: 381). This author also proposed a more technical definition of emotions: ‘... *emotion* refers not only to feelings but also to thoughts (as well as to the body): it is the combination of “feel” and “think” which distinguishes



“emotions” from “sensations.” (What links “emotions” with “sensations” is the combination of “feel” and “body.”) (Wierzbicka 2010:381).

Wierzbicka’s approach to defining ‘emotion’ is somewhat stipulative. On the one hand, it is not at all clear that her definition captures the meaning of the everyday word ‘emotion’. On the other hand, it is far from clear that the theoretical content of the technical term ‘emotion’ should be supplied by the ordinary, everyday, meaning of this word. The same objection can be raised against Parrott’s (2001), observation that everyone knows what emotion is but no one can define it: ‘The everyday concept of “emotion” in fact has no precise definition’ and ‘when psychologists speak of emotions, they refer to ongoing states of mind that are marked by mental, bodily, or behavioural symptoms’ (Parrott 2001: 3). Moreover, Wierzbicka’s criticism based on the lack of an agreed definition of the term ‘definition’ is not especially worrying. A definition is generally assumed to be a statement of the necessary and sufficient conditions for the applicability of a term. So, the task of defining the technical term ‘emotion’ involves stating the conditions that must be met for something to be referred to by this term. The problem is not to define ‘definition’ but to identify the necessary and sufficient properties that make it possible to distinguish systematically ‘emotions’ and ‘non-emotions’.

Oatley and Jenkins (1996) devote a chapter to defining emotions and propose three main features of components (1996: 96):

1. An emotion is usually caused by a person consciously or unconsciously evaluating an event as relevant to a concern (a goal) that is important; the emotion is felt as positive when a concern is advanced and negative when a concern is impeded.
2. The core of an emotion is readiness to act and the prompting of plans; an emotion gives priority for one or a few kinds of action to which it gives a sense of urgency- so it can interrupt, or compete with, alternative mental

processes or actions. Different types of readiness create different outline relationships with others.

3. An emotion is usually experienced as a distinctive type of mental state, sometimes accompanied or followed by bodily changes, expressions, actions.

These authors claim that the purpose of definitions is to provide an orientation about the subject and that 'they are subject to change whenever anything relevant is discovered', as 'Definitions in science are really working definitions' (Oatley and Jenkins 1996: 96). They take the view that the lack of a proper definition need not impede research in a particular field and give the example of the term 'sentence' in linguistics:

The reason we can treat a definition as merely a starting point is this: there is no simple or agreed definition of a sentence but this does not impede research or understanding in linguistics. The aim is not to discover such definition. What we seek is not, in the end, to define emotions but to understand them (Oatley and Jenkins 1996: 97).

This argument is less than convincing. There are syntactic structures whose analysis crucially depends on how the term 'sentence' is defined. For example, the string of words 'me happy' in the sentence 'That makes me happy.' can be analyzed as a type of clause (i.e. a type of sentence) because it has the subject predicate structure. However, whether this string of words is analyzed as a type of clause (i.e. sentence) or not crucially depends on what we take to be the defining properties of a sentence. By the same token, whether we categorize 'amae' as an emotion along with 'joy' and 'anger' depends on whether there is a principled basis for doing so. For this reason, defining 'emotion' explicitly seems vital for cross cultural research on emotions and their relation to language and communication, although it need not have implications for every study (just as an explicit definition of the term 'sentence' need not be of critical importance for the study of all strings of words).

Harré and Parrott (1996) describe emotions as central features of human life. 'Emotions are at once bodily responses and expressions of judgements, at once somatic and cognitive' (Harré and Parrott, 1996: 1), a view also held by Aristotle (1941).

Heelas (1986) defines emotions from the psychological point of view: 'Psychologically speaking, emotions as inner states are indeed located within the body, associated with psychological arousal and ways of behaving, associated with various contexts, and often experienced as coming from without' (Heelas 1986: 179). Emotions are also understood as inner experiences:

Regarding emotions as inner experiences, experiences which cannot be reduced to or seen as physiological arousal, intellectual activity or behavioural display, we favour a mentalistic locus. A great many other cultures "somatise" the emotions. Emotions are talked of as "bodily" occurrences, whether in terms of "organs" such as the liver, which are rarely (if ever) experienced, or in terms of bodily parts such as the stomach and the back of the neck, which can be felt (Heelas 1986: 179- 180).

Oatley and Jenkins (1996: 122) state that emotions in psychology have traditionally been regarded as 'extras' without serious influence over mental functions like perception, language, thinking, learning. However, their survey of the literature has led them to a different conclusion, namely that emotions are not extras but, the opposite; they are the center of human mental life. As Campos et al. (1994) put it:

Emotions are those processes which 'establish, maintain, change, or terminate the relation between the person and the environment on matters of significance to the person'. In other words emotions link what is important for us to the world of people, things, and happenings (Campos et al. 1994: 285).

The earliest definitions referred to emotions as "passions" (Greeks). The term "passion" derives from the Latin, *pati* (to suffer), which in turn is related to the Greek, *pathos*.

Philosophers have looked at emotions as:

- a) distrust of the body because they come from the affective part of the soul that is mortal and irrational and they should be blamed for contaminating reason (Plato, e.g. see 1989);
- b) being externally initiated and assigned to structures of a lower nature because of their unfavourable contrast with reason (Descartes, 1989);
- c) something undesirable and evil (Aristotle, 1941)
- d) a form of (false) reason or judgement (Stoics, e.g. Seneca, 1963)

Averill (1974) provides a more explicit definition of the term emotion starting also with the origin of the word itself, which is derived from the Latin, *e + movere*. The original meaning of the word was to migrate or to transfer from one place to another. It was also used to refer to states of agitation or perturbation in the physical and psychological meanings of the word.

The term 'emotion' has however only recently been applied widely and consistently to affective states. Parrott (2001: 4) uses term 'affective states' or 'affect' in relation to emotional feelings from broader psychological perspective with the term 'affect' referring to any psychological state that can be evaluated (or valenced)\_ as positive or negative. According to these definitions emotions are associated with reason rather than body (or bodily responses), which suggests that they are indelibly linked to human cognition.

### **3.3.3 A Cognitive Perspective on Emotions**

The term 'cognitive' refers to the mental processes of perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning. The cognitive approach to understanding emotions does not claim that emotions are cognitive, but that their recognition and interpretation require cognitive processes. Two types of cognitive processes are distinguished:

- a) Higher cognitive processes (inferential): complex reasoning processes that are influenced by beliefs
- b) Lower cognitive processes: include using basic facts and skills, automatic and unconscious processes.

The cognitive approach to emotions has been influenced immensely by early writings of ancient philosophers, who laid the foundations of modern thinking about emotions. The earliest cognitive approach to emotions is due to Aristotle, who described emotions as associated with actions and derived from people's beliefs (Aristotle, 1941:60). As we have seen, the idea that emotions influence physical processes of the human body is far from having been abandoned in modern studies. However, it is not the only effect that emotions have on human beings, although physical effects that emotions have on people are the ones that are visible and thus, widely recognisable. Because the cognitive approach relates to people's beliefs and experience in making judgements, this approach would include more complex emotions, rather than only basic, reflex-like, emotions.

In Aristotle's view, an important respect in which emotions are related to cognition is that their effects are cognitive, because emotions are based on evaluations of events which later affect our judgments. Aristotle categorizes emotions as pleasant or unpleasant, which is a distinction often adopted in later studies, including modern ones, as emotions are thought of as negative or positive. Thus, Darwin classified emotions in terms of 'low spirits', which are emotions such as anxiety, grief etc. that could be called 'negative emotions' and 'high spirits', such as joy and love, which could be called 'positive emotions'.

In modern psychology, the term 'emotional valence' refers to the positive and negative character of emotions (Charland, 2005a, 2005b). Positive and negative emotions are elicited by positive and negative environmental changes, stimuli, words etc. Positive valence is associated with attractiveness, negative valence with aversiveness (to an event, situation or object). However, the research presented in this thesis is one of only a few studies which have focused on the emotional valence (Davidson, 1993a; see also Davidson, 1993b). The term 'emotional valence' was introduced by Lewin (1951). Valence is an evaluative

notion that gives emotions personal meaning. Emotions are experienced when we judge whether events (or situations) have positive or negative significance for us and our wellbeing (a point developed in Lazarus' (1966) Appraisal Theory). The specific type of emotional response is shaped by primary or secondary appraisals. Primary appraisals are for instance, positive or negative implications for the individual. Secondary appraisals refer to the ways and abilities of individuals to cope with events.

The distinction between positive and negative emotional valence is directly relevant to the present study. Compliments are generally associated with positive connotations and positive emotional valence, whereas refusals are associated with negative connotations and have negative emotional valence. The present research investigates whether the emotional valence of these speech acts is systematically related to their cognitive effects in communication and to the production of speech acts of compliment and refusal in the cultures of England and Poland, aiming to provide an account of the relations between these effects and the production of these speech acts in these cultures. The binary distinction between positive and negative valence is particularly worth investigating because existing psycholinguistic studies (Charland 2005a and 2005b) show that the categorisation of emotional responses in terms of valence is more important for the way people interpret the behaviour of others than other features of the emotions they have experienced. As people have about the way compliments and refusals are interpreted and the way they make people feel in specific contexts. Therefore, it is important to consider emotional valence of speech acts as it affects their interpretation and impacts on the hearer.

The cognitive approach to understanding emotions is shared also by Descartes and Spinoza. According to Descartes emotions are out of the control of thought but they can be regulated by thoughts, especially the ones that are true. Spinoza claimed that emotions are based on evaluations and stand in sharp contrast with passions, which he described as 'confused ideas based on false beliefs, rejecting the world as it is' (Oatley and Jenkins, 1996: 17). The cognitive approach to the study of emotions remains very influential. As Oatley and Jenkins (1996) observe:

According to many psychologists the cognitive approach is still the most fruitful approach for understanding emotions. Not only do emotions result from cognitive evaluation, but we catch a glimpse of how, in the universal human pursuit of listening to and watching human stories, our own emotions are stirred. In reflection we can come to understand why they are stirred. (Oatley and Jenkins, 1996: 14-15)

Since the present study looks at linguistic communication and emotions Lazarus' (1991) Appraisal Theory of affective processes is of considerable interest. Lazarus (1991) argues that a thought must precede emotion or physical response. He supports this assumption by the well-known example of a person who sees a bear in the forest, and most likely thinks of it as possible danger that can cause body harm or even death (thought) while simultaneously feeling fear (emotion). The expression of fear comes next and the person decides to walk away, or run and hide (bodily response). Another bodily response in this case may be sweating or shaking as a result of fear. This chain of reactions to a stimulus (the sight of a bear) can be immediate and takes only several seconds, although it can take longer depending on a person's previous experience with bears. Thus, if a person (say, a child) believes that toy bears are cuddly toys that are cute and soft, and attributes these properties to a real bear, he/she most probably won't fear the bear straight away and the emotion he will (at least initially) experience will be different from fear (possibly, joy). However, seeing the bear getting aggressive and ready to attack will lead him to revise his old beliefs and to adjust his behavior. The mental processing effort necessary to come to a conclusion that a bear can be dangerous and should not be approached in this case will take time, and the reaction time will also be extended. The thought- emotion- reaction process will take longer the first time, but if the same person finds himself again in similar situation, his response will be immediate. Therefore, the cognitive approach is important for understanding emotions. As Oatley and Johnson-Laid observe:

In a typical emotional experience, people are aware of an emotion and of some aspects of the evaluation that gave rise to it. Thus the experience depends on two separate signals: the emotion signal and a propositional

signal of the evaluation that caused it. The theory allows for dissociations between these two kinds of signal. On the one hand, people may be unaware of the emotion signal, and hence unaware of their emotional state. On the other hand, a person may experience an emotion but without realizing its cause, or why it is so intense. (Oatley and Johnson- Laird, 1996: 363)

Although emotions themselves are not cognitive, the recognition of emotions is associated with cognition. Moreover, recognizing complex emotions requires higher cognitive processes in order to assess and describe a given emotional state in a particular situation.

Griffiths (1997) proposes a most promising account of emotions, which is certainly very useful for the purpose of the present study. He takes the view that it is reasonable to look beyond the affect-program model to understand emotions. Although, ‘the affect program system appears to be effectively the same in all human populations (pancultural) and effectively the same in the many individuals that possess it within each population (...), other emotional phenomena show much more variation both across and within populations [and] some emotions are common in one population and absent in another’ (Griffiths, 1997:101). The affective model not only excludes complex emotions, but also does not take into consideration cultural variation in emotions. Also, the idea of blends of various affect programs , so called basic affects (as mentioned earlier), to describe emotions that do not fit into the model, does not seem to be adequate in describing the whole range of emotions. Moreover, the most important objection to the affect program theory is that it does not include the cognitive involvement in the existence of emotions. Griffiths (1997: 102) proposes a more promising approach to describing emotions, which includes higher cognitive activity and characterizes emotions as ‘irruptive motivations’: mental states which do not result from planned means to ends reasoning. Griffiths argues that this definition provides a principled basis for including in the category of emotion both basic emotions (which are similar to reflexes) and more complex, often culture-specific emotions (such as ‘amae’ in Japan: the feeling of satisfaction due to the support received



from an elder person or authority figure) which clearly involve some higher cognitive processes (see Griffiths, 1997:242). Griffiths' characterisation of emotions is well-suited to cross cultural research and to theoretical pragmatic analysis for two reasons. First, by defining emotions as 'irruptive motivations' he does not commit to the view that the class of emotions is a natural kind, that they all share some underlying structure(s). This allows research on emotions in communication to include a wide range of more or less culture-specific phenomena into consideration without requiring the researcher to identify any underlying structures that these phenomena have in common (which would most likely preclude from the investigation potentially relevant phenomena). Second, within Relevance Theory (and within all post-Gricean approaches to communication) the interpretation of a communicative act is an inferential, i.e. higher cognitive, process; and Griffiths points out that emotions can be triggered:

- as a result of higher cognitive processes (e.g. fear resulting from a reasoning process which leads to the conclusion that a novel stimulus is dangerous)
- in opposition to higher cognitive processes (e.g. conscious stimulus evaluation (a) calls for an emotional response, but none occurs, or (b) shows that an emotional response is not warranted, but the emotional response does occur)
- without the involvement of higher cognitive processes (e.g. stimuli which trigger the emotion are not detected by higher cognitive processes).

As the inferential processes involved in the production and communication of a communicative act are higher cognitive processes and Relevance Theory provides an explicit account of their role in communication, it seems likely that Griffiths' work on emotions and the Relevance-theory perspective on communication could be brought together in providing a new theoretically well-motivated account of the relation between linguistic communication and emotions. As human

communication depends on higher cognitive processes, it is far from clear how an account of the relation between emotions and communication can be given, unless emotions too can be related to higher cognition in a principled way. The work carried out as part of the present study draws on this aspect of Griffiths' approach towards understanding emotions in the communication process.

### **3.4 The Functions of Emotions**

If emotions are products of evolution, the chances are that it is because they have an adaptive value. In other words, they have contributed in some way to the survival of the species. The ways in which emotions contribute to our fruitful interaction with our environment could be described as their functions. According to Oatley (1996):

Emotions have functions. They communicate to ourselves, configuring mental resources and making ready for certain kinds of action. They can communicate also to others, causing changes in the modes of our interactions, from cooperation, to withdrawal, to conflict, to deference. The main role of emotions, according to this argument, is management of the flow of attention and readiness in beings who have many goals and plans but for whom, because of our embodiment and its limitations, these plans do not always go as foreseen. Not all emotions are connected with goals, but I believe that the relationship of emotions to goals and plans indicates their primary functions, and allows for productive theorizing and empirical investigation (Oatley, 1996: 312).

Oatley (1996) focuses on the main function of emotions, which is the configuration of mental resources and preparation to take actions. He also emphasizes the importance of the relationship between emotions and goals as an indication of their primary function, despite the fact that emotions are not always connected with goals.

Parrot and Harré (1996) emphasize the importance of social functions of emotions. They associate emotions with human interaction and appropriate behaviour within a particular society. In these authors' views, emotions and their functions are being shaped by culture to allow individuals to function within that culture and follow established norms and conventions:

Certain emotions, such as shame and anger, also function to facilitate social control. This controlling function not only enforces norms but has a developmental purpose as well. By encouraging people to act in socially appropriate ways, the emotions of social control help to build the habits that constitute a virtuous character. For Aristotle, a person of good character is one whose mental functioning has been shaped by culture to function properly within that culture. (Parrot and Harré 1996: 3)

The most detailed list of functions of emotions has been put together recently by Izard (2010). He identified six broad categories of functions of emotions, and found that different emotions have different functions:

- 1) Interrupting/changing ongoing processing and focusing attention and direction of responses (This is a rather understudied function of emotions. According to Izard 'Attention focusing temporarily pre-empts other aspects of cognitive processing and may facilitate a change in emotion experience, and thus in motivation and future cognition and action' (Izard, 2010:367).
- 2) Motivating cognition and action and providing emotion information (including evolutionarily conserved communicative signals) to guide and coordinate the engagement of the individual in the physical and social environment for coping, adaptation, affiliation, and well-being.
- 3) Increasing (or decreasing) salience or value of an event to facilitate adaptive (or maladaptive) associations between context, event, emotion feeling, and response. This affects a responsive behaviour. For instance, seeing a tiger locked in a metal cage evokes different emotions and a different response than seeing a tiger ready to strike in the wilderness just meters away (example from Izard, 2011:373).

- 4) Contributing to emotion and behaviour regulation, well-being, and the safeguarding of sensitivities and concerns.
- 5) Social signalling, communication (a social function of emotions, such as establishing and maintaining harmonious relationships or differentiating individuals or groups from other; see also Fisher and Manstead, 2008).
- 6) Providing a neural (often conscious) workspace for assembling solutions under the influence of emotion feelings that may range from mild to urgent.

(taken and adapted from Izard, 2010: 365)

Izard's (2010) findings correspond closely to Oatley's (1996) views on emotions as communicators of actions, motivators to cognition and behaviour regulators.

Oatley and Johnson-Laird (1987; 1996: 363) propose that emotions are based on signals within the brain that set it into distinct modes which reflect priorities of goals and predispose people towards appropriate classes of action. Such actions include expressive behaviour that communicates emotions to other people. These authors also claim that emotions are typically caused by cognitive evaluations that may be conscious or unconscious. According to the communicative theory of emotions, each kind of evaluation gives rise to a distinct signal that propagates through the multiple processors of cognitive architecture to produce a basic emotion. This signal is very simple and it does not carry semantic information. Its function is to control the organization of the brain, to make ready mechanisms of action and bodily resources, to direct attention, to set up biases of cognitive processing, and to make the issue that caused the emotion salient in consciousness. The phenomenological experience of this signal is a distinctive feeling of happiness, sadness, anger, or some other emotional state.

Frank (1988), points out that the behaviour triggered by certain types of emotions may appear irrational from one perspective, but rational from another. According to Frank, these seemingly irrational behaviours result from rational strategies for social interactions. Frank focuses on the so-called 'social' emotions, such as guilt,

shame, anger, and envy, arguing that commitment creates a form of loyalty bond between people that all participants in a communication situation need to be aware of in order for this bond to be effective. For example, the loyalty bond is what often leads a person to keep an agreement that they committed themselves to in advance, even though they do not have any interest in doing so. Frank calls this kind of behaviour irrational and associates it with emotions such as guilt and shame. Rational behaviour would result in breaking an agreement by a person who does not benefit from it. Frank claims that a 'person's feelings 'commit' him to act in certain ways' (Frank, 1988:6). So, on this author's view, commitments are incentives for behaving in a particular way and are underwritten, as it were, by emotions. This can be illustrated by a simple example. If a stranger stops us in the street and asks us for directions, we tend to provide the stranger with the information (which is relevant to him, but not directly relevant to us), because we feel committed to being helpful, although we know that most probably we will not see that stranger ever again and he will not be in a position to reciprocate. So, we would give directions to a stranger because we feel the social bond that commits us to this person, although our behaviour is irrational from our point of view (we do not stand to personally benefit in any way from being helpful). Breaking this social bond or agreement would trigger feelings of guilt due to breaking a social commitment that we tacitly made independently of this particular situation.

### **3.5 Emotion, Communication and Culture**

Emotions play an important role in communication. However, they have been neglected in publications in the field of pragmatics. Emotions may be conveyed linguistically (i.e. by utterances such as, 'I'm happy') and non-linguistically (tone of voice, body language). The function of emotions is not simply informative but also social. Communication changes the people feel about each other, and emotions have impact on rapport between people; positive emotions (such as 'love') tend to bring people together and dispose people to be cooperative, whereas negative emotions (such as 'anger') tend to complicate, damage or even

destroy social relations. Emotions also function as commitments that lead people to behave in ways that often (seemingly or actually) conflict with rationality. Assuming that people have the ability to communicate their emotions and have certain emotional dispositions, we can predict how they are likely to behave in particular circumstances. For example, if we can assume that a person will feel remorse if they do something that harms us or if they do not help us when they are in a position to do so, we will be more inclined to trust that person in a particular situation. If we had to predict peoples' behaviour in the absence of assumptions about their emotional dispositions to respond in particular ways to particular circumstances, we would need to know them individually rather well and to base our judgements on a great many assumptions that we do not have (and even if we did have them, we would need to engage in a complex reasoning process in order to anticipate how they might respond to our actions, to what we let them know about our ideas, plans, as well as our suggestions as to how they should act). There are several other points of contact between communication and emotion, the most important of which are listed here:

- (a) Communication is explained in cognitive terms (reasoning in context) and emotions are non cognitive (reflex-like, automatic responses, which do not involve means to ends reasoning). However, cognition is considered to be an important aspect in interpretation of events which may be caused by emotions and may give rise to emotional responses. Communicative acts are among the causes and among the effects of emotions.
- (b) Emotions are triggered by stimuli which are related to relevant information. For example, the *fear* (emotion) of bears is related to the information that *bears are dangerous animals that can harm or kill a person* (worthwhile, i.e. relevant, information). As we shall see in Chapter 4, human cognition and communication are oriented towards relevant inputs to mental processing.
- (c) Cognition and communication are oriented towards minimizing the expenditure of mental processing effort (see Chapter 4). However, the inference processes involved in the comprehension of communicative acts are comparatively costly (in terms of processing effort); more costly than automatic, reflex-like processes such as linguistic decoding or – which is more

to the point here - than the processing of stimuli related to emotional responses. Therefore, it seems natural that emotions should play a major role in the economy of communicative behaviour (relating both to the production and comprehension of communicative acts). Another way in which emotions are related to economy of mental effort in communication is their function as commitments to social bonds. In the absence of such commitments (guaranteed by emotional dispositions), the lack of mutual trust between the participants in communication would lead them to a degree of cautiousness in the interpretations but also in the planning and production of communicative acts, which would be very effort consuming. Moreover, negative emotional valence associated with a communicative act is likely to trigger, as it were, greater caution (technically, 'epistemic vigilance'; see Sperber et al. 2010) on the part of other participants in the communication event, leading to more complex mental processing of the communicative act, and, therefore, greater expenditure of mental processing effort.

- (d) Economy of effort is not the only constraining factor in communicative interaction. The time available for the communication event (and for the production and the comprehension of each communicative act within the communication event) is always limited (and is sometimes very short). Not only do more complex inference processes require greater processing effort, but they also take more time. Therefore, emotions play a role in economy of time, as well as economy of effort.
- (e) The behaviour manifesting some emotions can be controlled, in which case it can be used to communicate something about one's emotions economically (and convincingly). For example, a smile expresses a positive emotion. As smiling can be controlled, smiles can be used to communicate this positive emotion (e.g. towards the thoughts conveyed by one's own utterance or toward the person at whom the smile is directed). Of course, behaviour which manifests emotions can also be used to manipulate people, say by pretending that the behaviour (e.g. smiling) is spontaneous and, therefore, sincere, when it is, in fact, consciously planned.

(f) Both emotion and communication can be described as rational. Since Grice's groundbreaking work on 'The Logic of Conversation' (reprinted in Grice 1989) the central problem for pragmatic theory has been to explain the rationality of human communicative behaviour. Modern pragmatic theory is concerned with one key question: how are people able to communicate reasonably reliably and routinely far more information than is encoded by (i.e. algorithmically paired with) the words and other forms of communicative behaviour that they use? Grice's answer was that participants in communication presume that communicative behaviour is guided by an overarching principle (the 'Cooperative Principle') which is realized by a set of more specific norms (the Maxims of Conversation). Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986; 1995) is a development of Grice's approach which explains the rationality of communication in term of the orientation of human cognition and communication towards worthwhile information (technically, towards positive cognitive [i.e. contextual] effects).

Frank's (1988) social commitment view of emotions entails that emotions are rational. Pham (2007) considers the emotions in the context of three concepts of rationality: (i) logical, (ii) material and (iii) ecological. Logical rationality concerns consistency in reasoning and logic. Material rationality is about the consistency between decisions and actions. Thus, it would be irrational to have a particular goal, but to decide to act in ways which make are not conducive, or are detrimental, to achieving that goal. Ecological rationality concerns our ability to relate to our natural and social environment.

Pham (2007) argues that the most important function of emotions is to support the ecological form of rationality:

The study of emotion raises a third type of rationality. Certain types of behaviours and actions are "rational" not because if they are logically consistent or serve the person's self interest but because they fulfil broader societal goals, meet higher moral standards, or serve greater evolutionary



purposes. Some of these behaviours and actions, in fact, may be against the person's material self-interest. For example, it would not be in a bystander's self-interest to take on an armed mugger and attempt to rescue the mugger's victim. However, if the bystander elects to do so, one could hardly call this act irrational. Such benevolent, altruistic acts are quite reasonable, even desirable, from a societal or moral standpoint, even if they seem irrational from a strictly material standpoint. (Pham 2007: 156-7).

The term 'ecological' according to Gigerenzer and Todd (1999: 489) refers to a concept of rationality as a measure of success in the external world and a part of a decision making process.

'(...) ecological rationality is a normative discipline that that requires descriptive knowledge about the processes underlying decision making. Normative statements about decision making involve both psychological and environmental structures, and to know what is best, we must know what structures go into the decision process' (Gigerenzer and Todd, 1999: 494).

The authors claim that the way people make decisions derives not only from the way the decisions should be made but also from a general ability to make them. This ability allows people to choose the best alternative in a given situation from a range of available options. The decision making process is guided by certain rules that can have social implications and follow from preferences and social expectations. This kind of behaviour does not derive from what is the best strategy overall but what is considered to be the best among the available alternatives in some specific circumstances (see Gigerenzer and Todd, 1999: 496). So emotions can be said to be ecologically rational in so far as they lead to best decisions under particular circumstances. For example, in some contexts, the emotion of fear leads to behaviour which is highly rational in terms of its outcomes. In other contexts, the same behaviour leads to behavioural responses which are not advantageous. This can be a case in situations where refusals are made. People

generally want to be approved of and appreciated (i.e. have positive face needs, see Section 4.7), so a 'natural' response to a situation when, for instance, a request is made (see Section 6.2.4a with the findings and Appendix 2 for a scenario on asking a friend to look after a pet dog- Part 2, Situation 3), would be to accept it (which a preferred response from the point of view of a speaker who utters a request) rather than refuse (a dispreferred response from the point of view of a speaker). A social expectation from the hearer would be to agree to a request (e.g. to look after a pet dog) as a matter of general social politeness, which is a face-threatening situation because it puts him/ her in a position of an imposition when a refusal will threaten the speaker's positive face and his/ hers negative face (i.e. freedom from imposition). Despite the imposition, a hearer often agrees to a request (although it may compromise his/her own comfort) so as not to disappoint the speaker. This observation is supported by the data collected as part of this study (see Section 6.4.2a), where Polish informants often did not make a refusal in the request to look after the neighbours' pet dog scenario, although they had work commitments themselves. They often claimed that it was problematic for them to fulfil this request but they felt that by refusing, they would put their neighbour in a worse position than they will be in themselves if they agreed to help. A logically rational response in this case would be to refuse, however, empirical research has shown that many informants would find a rational behaviour in helping others despite their own discomfort. In some circumstances they would rather fulfil broader societal goals than focus on their own best interest. However, in their culture, the negative emotions triggered by the refusal of help may well be ecologically rational in that they ensure a level of readiness of people to mutual help each other in a range of situations, which may be very beneficial to society as a whole under some (in fact many) circumstances.

Why is the ecological rationality of emotions pertinent to the logical rationality of communication? The answer is rather straightforward. If all emotions lacked ecological rationality, we would expect them not to contribute to the effectiveness and the efficiency of communication. However, if (at least some) emotions can be described as ecologically rational then there is no reason to assume that they

cannot contribute to the effectiveness and the efficiency of communication (Section 3.4 above).

(g) Communication events take place in the broader context of culture(s) and emotions are related to culture in a number of ways only some of which are mentioned here. Emotional experiences differ across cultures (Heelas 1986, Harré and Parrott 1996, Evans 2001, Harkins and Wierzbicka 2001) and as Evans (2001) points out: 'Every culture has its own emotional climate (...)' (Evans 2001: XIV). Emotions are also seen as cultural constructs (Parrot and Harré 1996, Heelas 1986, Lutz 1981, Lewis and Saarni 1985, Levy 1984, Gordon 1981), people's mentality/reasoning has been shaped by culture and makes them suited for a particular culture. Harré and Parrott (1996) claim that emotions are 'notably culturally variable in many of their aspects' (1996: 1.) Emotions seem to be complex, and emotion displays certainly are complex. Emotion display 'is a subject to rules and conventions; they are embedded in culturally specific moral orders and normative systems that allow for assessments of the correctness or impropriety of emotions. In some cultures emotions do not include private bodily feelings as the somatic bearers of judgements-they all display- yet others take bodily feelings to be one of the salient aspects of emotion' (Harré and Parrott 1996: 1). So, emotions impact on communication through the different cultural elaborations of their manifestations.

Cultural factors can also determine the intensity of certain emotions and social attitudes towards them (e.g. jealousy). As Parrot and Harré (1996) observe:

Understanding cultural variations in emotions is a most helpful way to appreciate the extent to which our own emotions have been shaped by our culture, and is indispensable for demonstrating what degree of plasticity exists in human emotional nature. Perhaps the most striking demonstrations of cultural variation are those that occur over time within a single culture, e.g. perception of grief and how it changes with time. Parrot and Harré (1996:10)

Culture can also influence how our bodies react to certain emotions. For example, we can train ourselves to suppress facial expressions or control breathing (i.e. reshape bodily responses to emotions). According to Wierzbicka (1999) every culture has a set of ‘emotional scripts’, which relate to cultural attitudes towards specific emotions and situations that they are associated with:

Every culture offers not only a linguistically embodied grid for the conceptualization of emotions, but also a set of “scripts” suggesting to people how to feel, how to express their feelings, how to think about their own and other people’s feelings, and so on (Wierzbicka, 1999: 240).

Different norms and cultural expectations are reflected in ‘emotional scripts’ used in different cultures. Examples of these scripts include e.g. script of ‘sincerity’ (see more on sincerity of compliments in Section 2.5.4b) or ‘spontaneity’. Wierzbicka claims that ‘the “scripts of sincerity” concern the value of presenting one’s feelings “truthfully”, that is, of saying, or “showing”, what one really feels, and not saying, or “showing” that one feels something that one does not in fact feel’ (Wierzbicka, 1999: 241). According to the author, there is a difference in cultural scripts concerning ‘solidarity’ in Polish and Anglo-American cultures. Polish people tend not to show what they do not feel, which means that their emotional display is situation-specific and differs from one scenario to another, whereas, Anglo-American culture tends to be keen on displaying ‘good feelings’ and suppressing ‘bad feelings’. Only ‘good feelings’ are used to build rapport with people in Anglo-American culture, as opposed to Polish people who are more understanding of a mixture of emotions and context-dependency of emotional displays that are often seen as more ‘honest’ or ‘sincere’. The display of ‘bad feelings’ is considered as being unpleasant or damaging to the image of a speaker in Anglo-American culture.

Similarly to Wierzbicka (2009), Izard (2011) discusses the so called ‘emotion schemas’:

(...) emotion interacting dynamically with perceptual and cognitive processes to influence mind and behaviour. Emotion schemas are often elicited by appraisal processes but also by images, memories, and

thoughts, and various non-cognitive processes such as changes in neurotransmitters and periodic changes in levels of hormones. (...)Their principal motivational component of emotion schemas consists of the processes involved in emotion feelings. Emotion schemas, particularly their cognitive aspects, are influenced by individual differences, learning, and social and cultural contexts. (Izard, 2009: 8, also see Izard, 1993).

Kitayama and Markus (2013) describe emotions as ‘an assortment of socially shared scripts composed of physiological, subjective, and behavioral processes. These emotion scripts develop as individuals actively, personally, and collectively adapt and adjust their immediate sociocultural, semiotic environment’ (Kitayama and Markus, 2013: no page).

Emotions, similarly to human behaviour, are regulated by cultural constraints and influenced by cultural and social processes (Kitayama and Markus, 1994/2013). Stets and Turner (2008) discuss ‘emotion ideologies’ as key elements of culture that are responsible for appropriate emotional responses in different situations (Stets and Turner, 2008:32-33). Together with emotions vocabulary, display rules and emotion stocks of knowledge (i.e. ‘emotional experiences that build up over time and become available for use in interaction’(Stets and Turner, 2008:33)), emotion ideologies ‘are invoked and used to guide social structure and individuals’ cognitions’ (ibid).

The set of scripts is interpreted in this research considering the conventional use of compliments and refusals (see Section 2.3). The issue under investigation is the extent to which institutionalised speech acts can be interpreted in an expected way and what the expected interpretation actually is, for instance, is conventional compliment still flattering and seen in positive terms or is paying compliments in certain situations seen as routinized social behaviour, so that they evoke negative emotions? These questions can also be related to refusals: when are refusals expected and are these ‘expected’ refusals seen in negative terms? Expected refusal is usually performed in a situation when we know that someone will refuse but we ask him/her anyway.

This stereotypical perception of compliments being associated with positive emotions and refusals with negative ones seems very vague and questionable (also

see Section 2.5.2 and 2.6.1). The proposed 'emotional scripts' do not seem to account for the relevant facts: emotions associated with certain situations and speech acts are very much context dependent (i.e. depend on a situation, those involved, their relationship and the relevance of a speech act to a particular time and place) and differ from situation to situation. What may be flattering to one person in a specific situation may not be interpreted in the same way by another person in the same situation or by the same person in another situation: what is relevant to one person may not be relevant in the same way to another. Emotions need to be considered in the context of the process of communication, rather than being determined by rigid, static, schemas. The way emotions can be related to the interpretation of communicative acts is considered in Chapter 4.

### **3.6 Summary**

In this chapter some important features of emotions have been introduced and described, showing how they can be brought together with a cognitive perspective on communication. Research on emotions from an evolutionary perspective showed that at least basic emotions were the product of evolution as they were universal, reflex-like responses to external stimuli. Emotions are defined in terms of their neurophysiological properties (Izard, 2010), schemas which describe the relations between their causes and their effects (Wierzbicka, 1999), the combination of three components: (a) response to evaluation, (b) readiness for action/planning and (c) mental state possibly accompanied by a physical symptom (Oatley and Jenkins, 1996). None of the definitions of emotions would deny that they emerge as responses to relevant experiences, that they are both 'somatic and cognitive' (Harré and Parrott, 1996: 1). As such, they should feature in any functional cognitive account of human communication. The cognitive approach to defining and investigating emotions focuses on the observation that their recognition and interpretation require cognitive processes. As the range of non-cognitive emotional responses is not confined to the basic emotions but includes those which are complex and culture-specific, an adequate cognitive definition of emotions must include complex as well as basic emotions. Griffiths' (1997: 102)

definition of emotions as ‘irruptive motivations’ (mental states which do not result from planned means to ends reasoning) meets this requirement, while overcoming the main shortcoming of the affect program theory of emotions and their definitions in terms of neurophysiological properties.

Since one of the aims of this study is to discuss emotions associated with compliments and refusals, the place of emotions in communication needed to be considered. In this chapter the most common approaches to discussing emotions were introduced. Emotions were discussed in terms of perceptions on this phenomenon introduced in previous research starting with the perspective on emotions as bodily changes and through their role in cognition. The place of emotions in communication was outlined in Section 3.5 in order to highlight the connection between cognitive processes responsible for communication and non-cognitive functions of emotions. Chapter 4 presents some important theoretical concepts used in the discussion of the findings of this study in Chapter 7.

## **Chapter 4: Theoretical Concepts: Relevance Theory, Linguistic Politeness and ‘Face’**

### **4. 1. Introduction**

The way we feel affects what we communicate and how we communicate. The thoughts that we share with others through communication and the way we go about sharing them affect the way they feel. This suggests that a plausible pragmatic theory should include an account of the role that emotion plays in communication. And yet, the relation between communication and emotion has been somewhat neglected in the field of pragmatics, although it has not been denied (see Moeschler 2009). Communication is generally seen as having two broad functions: the cognitive (informative, propositional, transactional) and the social (rapport-oriented, relational, affective-emotional) (see Watzlawick et al. 1967, Brown and Yule 1983). By and large, work within the cognitive and the social approaches has traditionally proceeded along parallel tracks and has had different goals. Typically, the cognitive turn in pragmatics, associated with developments of Grice’s (1967, 1989) ideas, such as Sperber and Wilson’s (1986, 1995) Relevance Theory and neo-Gricean pragmatics (see Huang 1994, Levinson 2000, Kecskes and Horn 2007) has aimed at modelling the inferential processes involved in communication. More directly than other approaches in the Gricean tradition, Relevance Theory has addressed the questions of what communication is, how it is achieved and how it can fail. In contrast to Grice and the post-Griceans, social pragmatics is concerned with the description of communication and, to the extent that it seeks explanations, takes a descriptivist stance: the view that systematic descriptions of communicative behaviour lead to explanatory insights (see Schiffrin (1994) for an overview). A typical example of this type of approach is Conversation Analysis (see Sacks 1992, Levinson 1983).

Perhaps it should not be surprising that emotions have not received much attention in either cognitive or social pragmatics. The central question for cognitive,



Relevance-theoretical pragmatics is how people generally succeed at communicating more than the linguistically (or otherwise) coded thoughts (where a thought is a structures string of concepts, a propositional mental representation). The answer lies with models of the inferential (i.e. computational) mental processes which take communicative acts and contextual assumptions as inputs and yield interpretations as outputs. Whatever emotional representations are like, they are not cognitive-propositional. Clearly, there is no obvious place for emotion(s) in cognitive-inferential models of communication.

Social pragmatics aims to describe what goes on in communicative interaction. However, the explanation of the role that emotions play in social interaction calls for an explicit account of the causal relations between communicative acts and their affective-emotional effects (see Section 4.7). In the absence of a cognitive-psychological model of human communication which provides an account of these causal relations, the treatment of emotions within social pragmatics, even in work on rapport management, has had comparatively little to say about emotions (see Spencer-Oatey 2011). Much work in social pragmatics is influenced by Grice's (1975; 1989) model of communication (outlined in Section 4.2).

This chapter introduces the theoretical background for the discussion of compliments and refusals through a brief consideration of two theoretical approaches to communication (Grice's Co-operative Principle in Section 4.2 and Relevance Theory in Section 4.3. The two accounts are compared in Section 4.6) and the concepts of relevance (Section 4.4), context (Section 4.5), communicative indirectness and linguistic politeness are considered in Section 4.7. The chapter concludes with a discussion of uses of language in relation to its functions (Section 4.8) which builds on some of the ideas presented in Chapter 2.

## **4.2 Grice's approach to communication**

Paul Herbert Grice (1989) laid the foundations for an inferential theory of human communication. His views describe communication as a type of social action

guided by a principle of cooperation requiring the communicator to make a communicative contribution which is appropriate to the topic of the conversation.

### **The Cooperative Principle**

‘Make your contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged’

Grice (1975:45)

In Grice's view, communicative behaviour is driven by certain norms and rules. Communicators are cooperative and they aim to make their communicative acts appropriate to the topic of communication in content and form. Grice argued that the inferential process is streamlined by the presumption that communicators observe certain norms of communicative behaviour, which he called the Maxims of Conversation. These are given here in a somewhat simplified form:

**Maxim of Quantity (Informativeness):** The communicator needs to be as informative as required when making a conversational contribution (but not more informative than required) to communicate the message successfully.

**Maxim of Quality (Truthfulness):** Do not say anything that you believe to be false or anything for which you lack adequate evidence.

**Maxim of Relation (Relevance):** Aim to make a conversational contribution which is relevant.

**Maxim of Manner (Style):** Be brief, avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity.

As Levinson observes: ‘Grice suggests that the maxims are in fact not arbitrary conventions, but rather describe rational means for conducting co-operative exchanges’ (Levinson, 1983:103). In other words, Grice provides an account of the rationality of communicative behaviour. One of Grice’s central claims is ‘that an essential feature of most human communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the expression and recognition of intentions’ (Grice 1989: Essays 1-7, 14, 18; Retrospective Epilogue; in Wilson and Sperber 2004:1). By developing this claim

Grice laid the foundations for inferential theory of communication as opposed to the classical code model. There are two generally recognized models of communication: the code model and inferential model. ‘(...) Communication can be achieved by coding and decoding messages, and it can be achieved by providing evidence for an intended reference’ (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:3). Verbal communication involves both models of communication which can, in principle, be combined in various ways as they are compatible. As Sperber and Wilson (1986) observe communication can be achieved by an encoding-decoding procedure and by inferential reasoning based on evidence produced by a person. There is a difference between the two processes. An inferential process leads a set of premises to achieve a set of conclusions, which logically follow from the premises. Decoding is the process which takes a signal as input and automatically (by an algorithmic procedure) delivers the received message. In communication which relies on an encoding-decoding mechanism the received message is fully warranted by the signal and the code. Human communication cannot be explained in this way because in human communication the messages are not fully specified by the language code (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:13; see Section 4.6 for more detailed account of Grice and Relevance Theory). According to Grice's theory of conversational implicature (1967), what the speaker means by an utterance can be divided into what is said (i.e. communicated directly) and what it is implied (i.e. communicated indirectly), where what is implied follows from the integration of what is said with the context, but is not derivable from what is said or from the context alone. So, Grice's model of communication is inferential. In his view, communication involves the use of the language code which is supplemented by inference in the comprehension process. Central to the present study is a more recent inferential model of communication (Relevance Theory) developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986; 1995) which differs from Grice's in building on the converse view that comprehension is an inferential process supplemented by coding and decoding.

Section 4.4 introduces the most important concepts of Relevance Theory (RT) and points out some respects in which this perspective on human communication

differs from Grice's ideas in ways which makes it possible to provide a natural account of the role of emotions in communication.

### **4. 3 What is communication?**

The question "What is communication?" suggests that a general answer which covers all forms of more or less faithful spreading of information (and/or misinformation) can be given. One of the starting points of Relevance Theory is that such a broad definition of communication would not be adequate because (mis)information can spread in ways which involve very different mechanisms. Thus, there would be no point in defining communication in a way which covers both the transfer of information between machines and the way ideas are disseminated in a university lecture, or by various media outlets, or gossip between friends, or whatever. This suggests that the question 'What is communication?' should be made more specific: 'What is the most important mechanism for spreading information among humans?' The answer to this question provided by RT is that human communication is best described as a process of the production and interpretation (i.e. comprehension) of evidence of the speaker's intentions: the informative intention (i.e. the intention to inform somebody of something) and the communicative intention (i.e. the intention to make the informative intention evident to the participants in the communication event). This process is guided by a cognitive efficiency measure termed 'relevance' (See Section 4.4).

### **4. 4 Relevance**

Relevance is a property of inputs to cognitive processing (e.g. utterances, thoughts). It is a positive function of improvements to the system of an individual's beliefs (technically, 'cognitive effects' or 'contextual effects') and a

negative function of the mental effort expended on deriving those improvements (i.e. effects).

### **Relevance**

A phenomenon is relevant to an individual:

(a) to the extent that the cognitive effects achieved when it is processed in context are large, and

(b) to the extent that the processing effort required for achieving the effects is small.

(adapted from Sperber and Wilson, 1986/95: 153)

The concept of relevance is at the heart of two law-like generalizations about human cognition and communication, known as the cognitive and the communicative principles of relevance:

- **The Cognitive Principle of Relevance**

Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance. (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 260)

- **The Communicative Principle of Relevance**

Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance. (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 260)

- **Presumption of Optimal Relevance**

(a) The ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee's while to process it.

(b) The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences. (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 270)

The principle of relevance provides the basis for a strategy followed by the speaker in planning and producing the communicative act and a strategy followed by the hearer in interpreting the communicative act:

- **Relevance-theoretic production strategy**

Given your preferences, choose the least effort-demanding option for the hearer. (Žegarac, 2004)

- **Relevance-theoretic Comprehension Strategy**

(a) construct interpretations in order of accessibility (i.e. follow a path of least effort);

(b) stop when your expectation of relevance is satisfied (Carston 2002: 380)

(Note: expectations of relevance may vary across different situations of utterance and with the relative developmental level of the hearer, from an expectation of actual optimal relevance, to more sophisticated and realistic expectations that allow for speakers' fallibility and/or deceptiveness; for detailed discussion, see Sperber 1994.)

Relevance plays an important role in human cognition as people are more or less constantly on the lookout for new worthwhile information. Humans tend to pay attention to those phenomena in the environment that they expect to turn out to be relevant to them. They mentally represent and process them with the expectation that doing so will improve their belief system. At the same time humans try to minimise the mental processing effort expended in doing this by reaching for information already stored in their belief system to minimise the mental processing effort necessary for retrieving worthwhile information from a communicative act (also see Section 4.5 on Context).

The necessary condition for achieving communication is that an act needs to convey the presumption that is worth paying attention to and make evident the intention to inform, i.e. give rise to an expectation of relevance. If the expectation is not fulfilled, communication is unsuccessful. This can happen for various

reasons, for instance, when the hearer does not access the appropriate context for the interpretation (e.g. because the appropriate context is not available to him). In this case, it is likely that the communicative act will be found under-informative and costly due to considerable expenditure of processing effort which is not adequately off-set by cognitive effects, say because the speaker's utterance is too vague. The intention of the speaker is not always met with the knowledge of the hearer and even under the best of circumstances, communication may fail.

In any plausible approach to communication, communicative behaviour is described as co-operative. However, there are differences in the characterisation of co-operativeness and in its theoretical status. Within RT participants are co-operative in that each participant invests some effort in figuring out other participants' goals and assessing their cognitive resources (e.g. interests, contexts available to them and the likely direction(s) of their inferences). The presumption that information comes from a source which is co-operative (in this technical sense of the term) makes it possible for the participants in communication to figure out messages in a way that minimizes the expenditure of processing effort. A communicator who is competent, sincere, and aims at optimal relevance, can be trusted. This, in turn, means that, as soon as some cognitive effects consistent with the assumption that the communicator is competent, sincere and is aiming at optimal relevance have been derived, the inferential reasoning process can be stopped without expending additional effort on checking the validity of the information conveyed or other ways in which the communicative act might be relevant. An important prediction of the orientation towards relevance (i.e. maximizing cognitive gain, while minimising processing effort) is that communicative acts (technically, ostensive stimuli) should be as easy to represent and process mentally as possible: using an ostensive stimulus which is more complex than is necessary will trigger additional expenditure of processing effort which is not off-set by any information that the communicator evidently intends to convey, so goes against the principle of relevance. This account of communication differs in some important respects from Grice's (1967; 1989) approach.

## 4.5 Context

In an inferential model of communication, the comprehension of a communicative act involves its integration with a context in which this act is relevant. For this reason, the concept of 'context' has a central place in an inferential model of communication. The context of an utterance can be described as 'everything that is available to be brought to bear on the utterance's interpretation, except the form and content of the phrase or sentence uttered (and any conventional meaning attached to gestures used)' (Allot, 2010: 38).

Sperber and Wilson (1986) give a more detailed definition of context:

'The set of premises used in interpreting an utterance (...) constitutes what is generally known as the context. A context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world. (...) context ... is not limited to information about the immediate physical environment or the immediately preceding utterances: expectations about the future, scientific hypothesis or religious beliefs, anecdotal memories, general cultural assumptions, beliefs about the mental state of the speaker, may all play a role in interpretation' (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:15-16).

Successful communication crucially depends on the relation between the speaker's intended meaning and the contexts available to both speaker and the hearer. These include information that is not necessarily immediately available to the hearer (i.e. it is not known to the hearer before the utterance) but can be obtained from the context created by a specific situation. Sperber and Wilson (1995:44) describe a situation which illustrates this point. Two people, Mary and Peter, are looking at a landscape and Mary notices a church somewhere in the distance. She says to Peter: *I've been inside that church*. At the point of uttering this sentence Mary does not stop to think whether Peter has noticed the building or not, but she makes with reasonable confidence the assumption that the intended referent of 'that church' will be salient (technically, 'manifest') enough in Peter's cognitive environment for him to be able to access it (see also Section 4.4 on Relevance).



Members of the same cultural group are believed to share a number of experiences, teachings and views. Outside the cultural group, however, there are many differences between representatives of other cultures and their beliefs and world views (see Section 1.1). Hence, in intercultural communication, the risk of misunderstanding/ miscommunication is very high.

The observation above also leads to possible differences in perception of certain communicative acts in various cultures or even within the same culture if the interlocutors make different assumptions about the context in which the communicative act should be interpreted. As Sperber and Wilson (1986) observe: ‘A mismatch between the context envisaged by the speaker and the one actually used by the hearer may result in a misunderstanding’ (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:16). Therefore, perceptions about compliments and refusals and responses to them may differ across cultures. ‘The argument is that if the hearer is to be sure of recovering the correct interpretation, the one intended by the speaker, every item of contextual information used in interpreting the utterance must be not only known by the speaker and hearer, but mutually known’ (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:18). This is the case with conventional uses of speech acts (see Section 2.2). Allot (2010: 41) observes that ‘it is now generally thought that participants create contexts through their speech acts’ (ibid). The use of contextual knowledge and interpretation of compliments and refusals is discussed in some detail in Chapter 6 and 7.

#### **4.6 Differences between Relevance Theory and Grice’s account of communication**

The originality of the RT approach to communication is best shown by contrasting it with Grice’s approach. The two models have much in common: (a) communication involves the production and interpretation of evidence of intentions, (b) relevance plays an important role in communication, (c) comprehension is described as an inferential process which takes the linguistic meaning of the utterance and a set of contextual assumptions as inputs and yields

interpretations as outputs, (d) communication is a co-operative social action and (e) linguistic communication involves both coding and inference. However, there are also major differences between Grice and RT relating to each of (a) to (e):

(a) Intentions in communication

In Grice's model the thought directly communicated by the utterance is specified by its linguistic meaning. Inferencing about a speaker's intentions are required to recover what is communicated indirectly (i.e. conversational implicatures). In RT inference about a speaker's intentions plays a major role in determining the propositional content of the utterance (its literal meaning) as well as in figuring out implicatures. In particular, RT does not take the literal meaning of the utterance to be its intended interpretation as the norm. In RT terms, the literal meaning of the utterance is just used as evidence of the speaker's informative intention whose content need to be inferred.

(b) Relevance plays an important role in communication

Grice does not define relevance, but observes that it is very important for explaining communicative interaction. RT provides an explicit definition of relevance. According to Grice's Co-operative Principle, the speaker aims to make her contribution relevant to the topic of the conversation. However, in RT-terms, the speaker aims to make a contribution which is relevant to the hearer (not to the topic).

(c) Comprehension is an inferential process which takes the linguistic meaning of the utterance and the context as inputs and yields interpretations as outputs

Grice's characterisation of the maxims of conversation does not provide a criterion or criteria which the hearer may use to determine whether a given utterance is adequately informative, relevant, brief, unambiguous, orderly and clear. In the absence of sufficiently explicit measures of informativeness, relevance, brevity, unambiguity, clarity and orderliness Grice's model provides

the basis only for ex post facto explanations of communication events. In other words, after a given conversational exchange has been completed, its outcomes can be described in terms of the maxims of conversations.

(d) Linguistic communication involves both coding and inference

In Grice's model, what is communicated directly (Grice's 'what is said') is specified more or less exhaustively by the language code. Inference involves the integration of the output of linguistic decoding and the context in the derivation of implicatures. According to RT, context contributes not only to implicatures but also to aspects of the explicit (i.e. descriptive, truth-conditional) content of the utterance, where context is defined as a set of assumptions drawn from various sources. Crucially, comprehension cannot be explained without a clear account of context selection.

In relevance theory context is defined in psychological, rather than physical terms which is important for several reasons. The context is a set of assumptions about the world, which affect the hearer's interpretation of an utterance. These assumptions do not only relate to the immediately accessible physical environment, but can be based on perception, drawn from memory (including the pool of cultural knowledge, or any other source).

Sperber and Wilson (1986) define context as:

The set of premises used in interpreting an utterance (...) constitutes what is generally known as the context. A context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world. (...) context ... is not limited to information about the immediate physical environment or the immediately preceding utterances: expectations about the future, scientific hypothesis or the mental state of the speaker, may all play a role in interpretation (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:15-16).

The issue of context selection is crucial as the mismatch between the context selected by the speaker and the contextual assumptions used by the hearer may

result in misunderstanding. Members of the same cultural group are believed to share a number of experiences, teachings and views. Outside the cultural group, however, there are many differences between representatives of other cultures and their beliefs and world views. Therefore, humans' cognitive ability to form representations of the world differs between representatives of different cultural groups. Hence, in intercultural communication, the risk of misunderstanding/miscommunication is very high. This also leads to possible differences in perceptions of certain communicative acts by members of different cultures or even within the same culture, if interlocutors use different contextual assumptions in comprehension. As Sperber and Wilson observe: 'A mismatch between the context envisaged by the speaker and the one actually used by the hearer may result in a misunderstanding' (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:16). Therefore, on the basis of this study, the assumption is that the perception of compliments and refusals and responses to them may differ across cultures. Two people being exposed to the same communicative act may have different representations of it and react differently to it. 'The argument is that if the hearer is to be sure of recovering the correct interpretation, the one intended by the speaker, every item of contextual information used in interpreting the utterance must be not only known by the speaker and hearer, but mutually known' (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:18). In other words, both the speaker and the hearer must be aware of the knowledge that they share.

We interact with the world by forming mental representations of it. As a consequence of this we live not just in a physical environment, but also – and more importantly for explaining culture and communication – in a cognitive environment. The context for the interpretation of a communicative act is drawn from the cognitive environment of a person. People who live in different cultures have different cognitive environments. The cognitive environment of a person is the set of all contexts available to that person. Therefore, people from different cultures have different sets of contextual assumptions available to them. Although, people live in the same physical world, they do not construct the same representations of this world, due to the differences in our cognitive abilities and differences in our immediate physical environments. Therefore, people construct

different representations and make different inferences on the basis of the differences in their cognitive environments (e.g. different perceptions, memories etc.), i.e. a set of facts that are manifest to an individual at a given time (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:39) and ‘which the individual is capable of mentally representing as true’ (Sperber and Wilson, 1986:46).

Communication between participants from different cultures is likely to be more difficult if (a) their mutual cognitive environments are small and (b) they are not aware of the differences between their mutual cognitive environments. Therefore, the speaker who intends the hearer to interpret a message in a specific way needs to supply the hearer with a context which allows the message to be inferred.

(e) Strong vs weak communication

In communicative interaction assumptions are not either communicated or not communicated, but may be communicated more or less strongly. In Relevance-theory terms, communication involves the production of evidence for a hypothesis intended by the communicator about the communicator’s intention to inform the addressee of a set of assumptions. It stands to reason that the evidence presented may be more or less conclusive. In other words, the evidence presented by the communicative act may present more or less reliable evidence of the communicator’s intention to convey a particular set of assumptions. Clearly, if an assumption is communicated directly, i.e. if it builds directly on the linguistic meaning of the utterance, it is also communicated at maximal strength. However, an assumption which is communicated indirectly, may be communicated very strongly, or neither very strongly nor very weakly, or it may be conveyed very weakly, depending on the extent to which the evidence that the communicator intended to convey it is conclusive. Consider the following exchange between two colleagues at work taking place on a Tuesday morning:

Mary: Is James coming to the university today?

Peter: a) He was in last Tuesday.

b) I saw him in the library five minutes ago.

Assuming that James is not known as a person who always comes to the university on particular days of the week one of which is Tuesday, Peter's utterance (a) communicates the assumption that James is probably coming to the university far less strongly than (b). While utterance (b) provides conclusive evidence that James is very likely to be in the university (as he was seen in the university library only a few minutes earlier, the evidence for this conclusion provided by answer (a) is less conclusive than that provided by answer (b), so (b) implies strongly something like: 'James is almost certainly in the university at the time of speech'.

In Gricean pragmatics, including RT, implicatures are generally described as non-propositional cognitive effects, because, unlike the thought (i.e. proposition) directly expressed by the utterance, an implicature follows from integrating the proposition expressed with the context (but is not derivable from the proposition expressed or the context alone). However, an implicature is a conceptual mental representation; it is a structured string of concepts and it does have a propositional form.

The RT account of degrees of strength with which implicatures are communicated provides the basis for an original analysis of poetic effects. In RT terms, a poetic metaphor makes marginally more manifest (informally, salient) a vast array of weak implicatures (i.e. implicatures conveyed with very little strength). These implicatures are conveyed so weakly that they are mentally represented. What a metaphor conveys is an impression, rather than a list of assumptions which are individually represented mentally. Sperber and Wilson (1986) describe an impression as 'a noticeable change in one's cognitive environment, ... resulting from relatively small alterations in the manifestness of many assumptions, rather than from the fact that a single assumption or a few assumptions have all of a sudden become very manifest' (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 59). As Sperber and Wilson (1986: 224) point out: 'Utterances with poetic effects can be used precisely to create this sense of apparently affective rather than cognitive mutuality' (cited in Moeschler 2009: 459). It seems clear that the RT account of

poetic effects explains non-propositional affective aspects of poetic metaphor in cognitive terms. As Moeschler (2009) observes: “In another quotation, Sperber and Wilson (p. 222) give a more precise definition of non-propositional effects: ‘What look like non-propositional effects associated with the expression of attitudes, feelings and states of mind can be approached in terms of the notion of weak implicatures.’” (Moeschler 2009: 458).

If Moeschler's argument is broadly along the right lines, it suggests a natural point of contact between cognitive and social approaches to communication in pragmatics: the investigation of the relation of particular cognitive mechanisms and cognitive inputs, i.e. communicative acts, to mental processing with various socio-cultural factors in explaining the causal relations between particular forms of communicative behaviour and particular affective-emotional effects.

#### **4.7 Relevance, Indirectness and Linguistic Politeness**

A central component of the communication process is rapport between participants, because the communicator, who claims the hearer's attention and creates an expectation of adequate relevance, takes responsibility for the information which is communicated. The communicator's failure to fulfil the responsibility taken by the decision to engage in communication may be perceived as impolite and may affect the rapport between participants. The general assumption is that people engaged in communication are aware of, or that they tacitly know, the norms of social interaction, including the norms of (linguistic) politeness. This assumption also relates to the mutual cognitive environments of the interlocutors. As Yule observes: ‘It is also possible to specify a number of different general principles for being polite in social interaction within a particular culture. Some of these may include being tactful, generous, modest and sympathetic toward others’ (Yule, 1996: 60). The impact of socially desirable and socially undesirable interaction is explained in terms of some contextual assumptions about the universal rights and obligations of people as members of society. According to Mey: ‘Politeness is our strategy for

conversational cooperation with least cost and maximum benefits to all interlocutors' (Mey, 2001:76). It follows from this that the speaker, by evidently trying to claim the hearer's attention, takes responsibility for acting in the hearer's best interests, so that his failure to act in the hearer's best interests may easily be perceived as offensive to the hearer and therefore become a case of impoliteness, because it implicates some assumptions which are undesirable to the hearer.

Interlocutors' rights and obligations mentioned above are often described as 'face', the 'emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognise' (Yule, 1996: 60). If people do have a sense of self that they expect others to recognise, then the failure to do so in communicative interaction is likely to be perceived as more relevant than anything else that the communicator may (or may not) intend to communicate. Brown and Levinson (1987: 64) draw a distinction between two types of 'face' needs: 'positive' and 'negative'. Positive face relates to a person's need to be approved of as an independent member of society. For example, people prefer to hear positive things about their appearance, achievements, possessions because they want to be appreciated and approved of and be seen as competent in what they do, and so on. Thus, people enjoy being complimented on their possessions, appearance etc. (like a new jumper or haircut) because that makes us feel appreciated and confirms good taste, choices, abilities, and so on. Negative face relates to a person's desire and right to be free from imposition. People do not want to be in a situation that creates pressure of them accepting or rejecting for instance a request, where one or more interlocutors will be exposed to a face threat. For example, we would not expect a guest staying in our house to do our laundry or any form of housework.

In social interaction people often impose on each other's positive and negative face and that is something that sometimes is hard for the participants to ignore 'since every engagement in conversation opens up the possibility of losing face'(Mey, 2001:75). Therefore, in order to avoid appearing impolite they generally acknowledge this imposition and try to act cooperatively to avoid the imposition or its detrimental impact on face. In fact, the ways in which the



speaker acknowledges the imposition on the hearer are often standardized or conventionalized in language use. When face is threatened in conversation, both positive face and negative face are generally under threat. Expressions whose function is to take the edge off face-threats have been labelled 'mitigation devices' (Mey 2001: 75) and are used to minimize the risk of losing and/or threatening face. Another device whose function is to avoid face-loss is (conventionalized) linguistic indirection, which may involve different degrees of politeness on a scale: 'Give me..' which is very strong and direct or 'Can I please have...' as more polite and more indirect, and 'Could I have...' which is even more polite and more indirect. Apart from the closeness of the relationship between the participants in the discourse, their cultural backgrounds are also important, as different cultures require different (standardized or conventionalized) forms of politeness. As Morand (1996) points out:

Anthropologists have found that the amount of mitigation, or indirection, which is considered "satisfactory" or normative in a culture, can vary. Some cultures, all other things being equal, are rather indirect and polite; other cultures tend toward overall brusqueness in speech. Given the critical role of politeness in mitigating interpersonal friction, and in sustaining others' face, cross-cultural mismatches in norms for politeness utilization can cause severe problems. (Morand, 1996:56)

The relations between communicative (in)directness, linguistic politeness and people's reactions to certain communicative acts is important for describing and explaining the rapport between the participants within a given culture and allows comparisons with other cultures. However, the consideration of rapport management in work on linguistic politeness and face is (whether explicitly or implicitly) couched in the view of communication as a process of sharing information/thoughts/ideas (i.e. propositional representations) with little or no systematic investigation of the causal relations between communicative behaviour, the message, and its affective-emotional effects. The consideration of emotions in Chapter 3 and the concepts of RT introduced in this chapter (Section 4.4) provide a starting point for exploring this issue.

The framework of Relevance Theory provides the basis for an investigation of institutionalised speech acts such as compliments and refusals in a way which does not suffer from the limitations of the functional perspectives on communication such as Speech act Theory. As discussed in Chapter 2, speech acts have been researched in a variety of languages and cultures. The research usually focuses on their types and functions in various communicative contexts. Speech acts are not performed in isolation, i.e. only one act of speech per exchange. Usually one speech act is accompanied by some other e.g. compliments often come together with gratitude, i.e. saying *Thank you* and refusals with apologies, i.e. saying *I'm sorry*. In other words, the speech acts typically have a variety of functions depending on the context of situation, rapport between interlocutors and relevance to the hearer in a given context (see Section 2.5. and 2.6). In the case of compliments and refusals, face needs can be fulfilled in various ways. Compliments are generally face-enhancing, as they fulfil positive face needs to be appreciated and approved of (see Section 2.5). They can, however, be face threatening if the compliment is too personal and the hearer sees it as an imposition (i.e. a negative face threat). Refusals are traditionally described as face-threatening (see Section 2.6), because they suggest that hearer does not agree with a speaker (positive face threat). Refusal is a response to another speech act, such as invitation, suggestion, which poses a threat to the hearer in the first place (i.e. it threatens his/her negative face-freedom from imposition). However, the face-threat will depend on a range of contextual factors, including the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, the reasons for refusing and previous occasions of social interaction between the participants on which refusals were made by one or more of them, to mention but a few.

In Relevance Theory terms the function of every communicative act is to achieve some positive cognitive (i.e. contextual) effects in an audience. In the case of institutionalized speech acts, such as those of compliment and refusal, the majority of these cognitive effects fall in a set which can be described reasonably explicitly (e.g. conveying assumptions about the speaker's positive evaluation of and attitude towards something relating to the hearer's possessions, personal qualities or actions (compliments); declining the invitation to act in a manner

previously described by the hearer as desirable to him/her (refusals)). However, the speaker, in performing one of these speech acts, may intend to communicate (e.g. praise, regret) or to avoid communicating (e.g. flattery, lack of consideration for the hearer's feelings) a vast range of other assumptions depending on his or her personal preferences and various contextual assumptions which may be specific to the situation at hand. So the RT framework allows for a natural account of both the situation independent, institutionalized functions of communicative acts and those of their aspects which are particular to actual communication situations. This account makes it possible to integrate the insights into these speech acts from the functional approaches to communication such as Speech Act theory while identifying both the cultural regularities in their performance and reception and their situation specific aspects. Moreover, the focus on relevance in communication makes it possible to provide a principled basis for the descriptive taxonomic classifications of types of compliments, refusals and other speech acts, such as apologies, which have received considerable attention in the literature.

Apologies have been widely researched over the years (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984, Cohen 1996, Ogiermann 2009). Similarly to refusals, apologies are so called 'post event acts' or 'second parts' in adjacency pairs, i.e. they are responses to other acts of speech, such as invitations. There is a fair amount of discussion regarding the classification of apologies. According to Austin (1962) apologies belong to the category of 'behabitives' together with e.g. congratulating and challenging, which are concerned with reactions to the behaviour of others. However, Searle (1969) assigns this speech act into a category of 'expressives' similarly to thanking and welcoming, which express psychological state towards the proposition. These two categorisations are interesting from the point of view of the communicative intention of the speaker towards the hearer and the event that may require an apology to take place. This arguably creates the potential need for negotiation between satisfying social goals and illocutionary goals (Leech, 1983). Also, this provokes/encourages a discussion of social functions of apologies (expression of politeness and good manners; acknowledgement and respect for an addressee) and so called, 'ritual apologies' performed as part of

convention (see Section 2.2. for more on institutionalised speech acts and Goffman 1971 for the distinction between ‘substantial’ and ‘ritual’ apologies).

Apologies involve satisfying various face needs and refraining from face threats. On the one hand, they can minimise the face threatening aspects of refusals, on the other hand, they are face threatening acts themselves. Apologies threaten the speaker’s face as he/she admits making a mistake and violating accepted social norms or owns up to an inability to do something. The fact that the speaker takes responsibility is a threat to his positive face but at the same time saves positive face of the hearer (Olshtain 1989, Ogiermann 2009). If the responsibility was denied the hearer’s positive face would have been threatened. Edmondson (1981) described apologies as hearer’s supportive behaviour’ as it saves hearer’s face.

Discussion of apologies traditionally, seems to be based on a strategy of responsibility or acknowledgement of responsibility (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984, Ogiermann 2009). That’s a privilege of the speaker who can take on responsibility for the offence created between him/her and the hearer, which will be seen as apology. A denial of responsibility is at the other end of the spectrum and it understood as rejecting the need to apologise. The middle ground between the two is according to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (ibid) explicit self-blame and self-humbling on the part of the speaker. The strategy of responsibility can be complemented by one of three repair strategies (i.e. explanation, offer of repair or promise of forbearance) to mitigate the force of an utterance and maintain rapport between interlocutors. Repair strategies usually depend on the degree of the offence, so they are also context dependent.

From the perspective of RT the difficulty in categorising apologies as speech acts stems from the different patterns of cognitive (i.e. contextual) effects that a speaker may intend to achieve by apologising, so speech acts need not be seen as involving a conflict between the informative and the social functions of language. Rather, the conflict arises due to the difficulty in achieving the desired effects while avoiding to achieve others which are not intended. Moreover, in a given situation an apology may be relevant both as a reaction to the hearer's behaviour and as an expression of the speaker's attitude towards an action of his or hers, so it

Austin's and Searle's categorisations are not mutually exclusive. It is possible for culture-specific patterns of relevance of apologies in particular types of communication situation to emerge and these could be fruitfully investigated in terms of the relation between institutionalized aspects of the speech act of apologising (e.g. the choice of linguistic strategy for apologising), situation schemas, speaker's intentions and the affective-emotional responses to apologising and receiving apologies.

This leads to a string of criticisms that Speech Act Theory is faced with (see Sperber and Wilson 1989/1995:243-354, Bird 1994: 293-302).Section 2.2 discussed briefly Speech Act Theory in light of this current study. Through introduction of a concept of indirect speech act, Searle (1969) acknowledged the importance of pragmatics in understanding context that was selected in inferential process to gain understanding of a produced message. Although, Speech Act Theory has been of interest to pragmatics (see Levinson 1983), Sperber and Wilson (1995) question the way speech acts have been investigated, i.e. through their taxonomy and links to Grice, rather than from the perspective of their interpretation. Speech Act Theory comes under scrutiny for neglecting the assumption that 'the assignment of every utterance to a particular speech-act type is a part of what is communicated and plays a necessary role in comprehension. What is surprising is how little attention has been paid to justifying this assumption' (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:244). This is because one action that is performed (i.e. a type of a speech act) cannot be discussed without shedding light on another necessary action (i.e. the message communicated) without any justification. Sperber and Wilson (1995) use tennis analogy to discuss it and claim that tennis players generally know how to classify different strokes (e.g. backhand) but this does not mean that they are unable to perform or return a stroke without its correct classification. Interlocutors are generally aware of various communicative situations and the types of speech acts used and they perform this actions without necessarily classifying them into different types. What is more important in performing these acts is the speaker's intention and the way they are interpreted in context. Thus, the point that Sperber and Wilson (1995) make is that speech acts should be discussed considering not the fact that a

speaker is aware that he/she is producing a specific speech act but he/s she communicates certain properties of that speech act that is recognised by a hearer in a way that is desired by the speaker. The discussion of these issues continues in Chapter 7 using the data collected for this study.

## **4.8 Summary**

The consideration of emotions in Chapter 3 shows that emotional states influence the mental processing of communicative acts because they affect: (a) the mental processing effort required for the interpretation of a communicative act, (b) the motivation for investing processing effort into interpreting the communicative act and (c) context selection. In this chapter the RT and Grice's approaches to communication are introduced and contrasted showing that (a) to (c) follow as predictions only from the former model of communication. The key concepts of RT are introduced and a case is made for the view that there is a natural affinity between indirectly communicated assumptions whose salience is low (technically, weak implicatures) and their emotional-affective effects on the hearer. This affinity follows from: (a) the fact that affective effects can be induced by subliminal stimuli, and (b) that (very) weak implicatures function as (or are) subliminal – as they need not be salient to the point of being mentally represented. An interesting prediction of RT is that an assumption which is communicated very weakly is unlikely to be very relevant in virtue of its propositional content, so the main point of communicating the assumption may be to trigger some emotional-affective response in the hearer. Another point directly pertinent to the present study concerns the relation between the relevance of communicative acts and their emotional valence. If human cognition and communication are oriented towards relevance, then, other things being equal, a communicative act should have positive emotional valence in virtue of giving rise to expectations of relevance (where relevance is a measure of cognitive efficiency, defined as a positive

function of informativeness and a negative function of processing effort). In other words, if our cognitive system tends to seek worthwhile information, then finding such information should be rewarding and trigger some sort of affective emotional-effect which has positive valence. Of course, things are not always equal. For example, people generally like to be approved of ('positive face') but this does not mean that any sincere and well-meant compliment will be considered appropriate and will have positive emotional valence. And conversely, the refusal of an offer may be inherently face threatening to the hearer, but may, under some circumstances be met with acceptance and have positive, rather than negative, emotional valence. An obvious prediction of RT is that a speaker who anticipates that the refusal will have a negative emotional impact on the hearer will try to mitigate it in some way. The aim of the empirical study, presented in Chapters 6 and 7 is to test some of these predictions.

## Chapter 5: Methodology

### 5.1 Introduction

This project focuses on linguistic aspects of communication of emotions in complimenting and refusing behaviour by English and Polish native speakers. The methods selected for the data collection require investigating the speech acts of compliment and refusal and the emotions associated with their production and reception (see Chapter 2) to find out whether there are any differences or similarities in their performance in the cultures of England and Poland and what the typicality and frequency of the responses (i.e. certain types of words and phrases associated with compliments and refusals) are. The study is mainly qualitative but it has some important features of quantitative research as most of the data was collected through a survey. Questionnaires are usually associated with quantitative research, yet this study uses questionnaires in a form of Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) to collect qualitative data.

The research investigates the following hypotheses:

1. There are differences between cultures that are closely related.
2. There are differences in the ways the speech acts of compliment and refusal are realised in Polish and English culture
3. There are causal relations between emotions, speech acts and culture.

This chapter presents an overview of the features of the qualitative research (Section 5.2) lines of investigation used in this study (written and spoken data collection; Section 5.3). The concepts of research validity, reliability and ethics are discussed in Section 5.4. Section 5.5 discusses the study design and finally Section 5.6 presents a summary of the chapter.



## 5.2 Qualitative Research: Overview

The research carried out in this study uses qualitative research methods, **which involve collecting interpretive data based on participants' perceptions on everyday social situations**. The aim of qualitative research is to broaden horizons and understanding of a chosen phenomenon by adding more information to the selected research area, discuss possible interpretations and meanings that people bring (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Qualitative research tends to be complex as it involves an investigation of a wide range of data that may include interviews, images and videos. This is the case also for this study, which takes on a several sets of data including written DCTs, language corpora, recordings and radio interviews (see Section 5.3 and 5.6, Chapter 6).

This study embraces aspects of qualitative research which is of explanatory nature. Qualitative measures allow for the research to explore a new territory, be flexible and rely on the developments and responses of informants **to test hypotheses based on general assumptions about complimenting and refusing behaviour**. 'This means that the research focus is narrowed down only gradually and the analytic categories/concepts are defined during, rather than prior to, the process of the research' (Dörnyei, 2007: 37). The general assumptions about the findings, in this case similarities and differences in production and reception of compliments and refusals, have been a starting point for the study design. This highlights the emergent nature of qualitative research (Dörnyei, 2007: 37), which is flexible and open to developments that may emerge as the study progresses. **The flexibility of qualitative research refers to the study being based on general assumptions that are later developed into specific hypotheses. In the case of this study, the general prediction was based on an investigation of the ways compliments and refusals are performed in the relatively proximate cultures of England and Poland and some general assumptions about the role of emotions in communication. The predictions about the relations between the speech acts of compliment and refusal were compared to the findings of several other studies and**

the general literature in the field of speech act research (see Chapter 2). Later stages of the study focused on specific similarities and differences in a ways compliments and refusals are performed in relation to emotions associated with them and clear research questions were identified (Section 5.1). The discussion of these issues is based on research on emotions (Chapter 3) and pragmatics (Chapter 4). The assumptions and conclusions made in this part of the thesis were tested by the empirical research presented in Chapters 5 and 6). The qualitative data is presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

The main characteristics of qualitative research include:

- 1) Analysis of qualitative data (e.g. interviews) which is usually transcribed
- 2) A natural setting of research that is not manipulated or altered to fit the research purposes
- 3) Consideration of participants' opinions about the situations and meanings that are attributed to these situations ('an insider perspective')
- 4) Small sample size
- 5) Interpretive analysis: the collected data is a subject to researcher's interpretation

(Adapted from Dörnyei, 2007: 37-38)

Each of these points is addressed at the empirical stage of the research. The study is of explanatory nature. It uses a DCT set of scenarios to collect data (see [Appendices 1 and 2](#)). Informants were asked to put themselves in a series of situations and provide the first response that comes to their mind for each situation and then explain how they made them feel. The subjective opinions of the participants were considered in shaping the patterns of responses to the scenarios provided in the survey (see point 3 above, Dörnyei, 2007). The role of the researcher was then to interpret their responses by looking at their patterns (point 5, *ibid*). The responses were then classified into several categories on the basis of their content and according to the division that has been established in previous research in the field (see Chapter 2 and 6). The flexibility of the study mentioned above (point 2, *ibid*) was addressed by adjusting categories of

responses and changing the assumptions on what complimenting and refusing behaviour is like to what has actually been said by the informants. The respondents' interpretations could have been classified to more than one category and perceptions on the investigated speech acts have emerged as being different to certain prior assumptions (e.g. some compliments were interpreted as requests; see Chapter 6). The spoken data collection was based on recordings and unscripted and semi-scripted radio interviews and included a smaller sample of data that was transcribed (point 1 and 4, *ibid*). The written data collection using DCTs involved 200 respondents. This stage of data collection resembles quantitative research due to its scale and the type of research tool. However, the type of data that was elicited is qualitative, as the informants had to provide their responses to open-ended questions/ scenarios (see Section 5.3.1. and 5.4.1). The two lines of investigation are discussed in more detail in the following section (5.3).

### **5.3 Lines of investigation**

The empirical investigation is divided into two stages: written and spoken data collection. Each of these stages consists of two parts: written data collection is divided into a pilot study and a main study and spoken data collection into recordings and non-scripted radio interviews (see [Appendices 1-8](#)). Additionally, Polish and English corpus data (Polish Corpus: NKJP, Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego and English Corpus: BNC, British National Corpus) was used to investigate conventionally used compliments and refusals (See Chapter 2). Exploration of the corpus focused on the transcripts of spoken conversations from various sources (e.g. conversations between family members, friends). This section discusses aspects of written and spoken data collection.

### 5.3.1 Written Data Collection

Written data collection was executed through discourse completion task (DCTs) questionnaires and was selected as the main method of data collection following previous research on speech acts (such as Blum-Kulka 1982, Olhstain 1983, Kasper and Dahl 1991, Rose 1992, Chen 1993, Cohen 1996, Golato 2003, Félix-Brasdefer 2010) as the most widely used research tool in the type of research that this project involves.

There are several reasons for choosing DCTs as the main data collection instrument. First, DCTs are the most commonly used research tools in speech act research that elicit required speech acts through a set of appropriate scenarios that provided social and contextual clues. Second, DCTs are believed to provide reliable data, as the responses collected through this research method tend to resemble naturally occurring conversations. Through a series of open-ended questions that describe situations from everyday life, DCTs encourage informants to provide detailed responses, rather than being limited to ticking boxed and choosing from a list of pre-selected responses. Written data is believed to resemble spoken data, especially in terms of the use of conventional compliments. There are arguments that DCTs measure symbolic action rather than pragmatic action performed by respondents (Golato 2005). DCTs require informants to provide responses to some social situations. By putting themselves these situations, they activate their knowledge about these situations based on their experience and provide responses that they found suitable in each scenario. By relating scenarios to real life examples, informants provide responses that they would have used in a naturally occurring exchange.

‘DCTs are in a crucial sense metapragmatic in that they explicitly require participants not to conversationally interact but to articulate what they believe would be situationally- appropriate responses within possible, yet imaginary, interactional settings. As such, responses within a DCT can be seen as indirectly revealing a participant’s accumulated experience within a given setting, while bearing questionable resemblance to the data which actually shaped that

experience. This suggests that the DCT is a valid instrument for measuring not pragmatic action, but symbolic action' (Golato, 2005: 13).

This is an important argument for a study on compliments in relation to their function as institutions (see Section 2.3 for more information on institutionalised speech acts) and in phatic communication. The conventional use of compliments and refusals can be easily elicited using appropriate scenarios with situations that informants are familiar with to compare patterns their responses. Open-ended questions provide room for respondents' expression of their feelings that is relevant to their previous experience and knowledge of the behaviour appropriate and/ or acceptable in a given situation. This makes the responses more natural and provides in-depth insights into person's understanding of a situation and often reasoning for choosing a particular type of response.

Moreover, DCTs allow collecting a large sample of data easily and quickly from a large group of respondents at the same time. Data collection can be carried out electronically for respondents' and researchers' convenience. It also allows controlling variables, such as age, nationality and occupation. This is particularly important in an intercultural study that targets specific cultural groups.

One of the disadvantages of DCT questionnaires is their comparability with authentic conversations (Tran, 2004). The claim is that they cannot be automatically equated with actual produced speech. DCTs are often perceived as artificial, presenting only short written segments rather than extracts that would resemble real-life exchanges (Rose, 1994). The situations from questionnaires are also often described as unrealistic to participants who may not have always been in a situation from a scenario (Cohen and Olsthain, 1993). Jucker (2009) claims that often the space provided on a sheet affects the length of the response and (when provided) a follow up response of an imaginary interlocutor is unnatural as it has an impact on informants' responses. Another objection to DCTs is that participants' responses reflect what they think they should say rather than what they actually want to say or would say in a given situation (Boxer 1996, Golato 2003). Moreover, DCTs do not include additional discourse information, such as prosodic features and non-verbal aspects of communication that contribute to the

interpretation of a communicative act. The fact that DCT scenarios are set to resemble oral exchanges but are in written form have also been scrutinized as this makes DCTs elicit test-like rather than authentic oral responses (Sasaki 1998, Martinez- Flor and Usó- Juan 2011).

DCTs have been criticised by researchers (Beebe and Cummings 1996, Bodman and Eisenstein 1988, Hartford and Bardovi- Harling 1992) for eliciting shorter responses than real life examples of a given speech act. However, this is not the case in this study where responses were surprisingly long and detailed (see Section 6.4.2b). This observation is shared by Golato (2005), who explained it by the lack of an interlocutor in filling in a questionnaire. In a naturally occurring conversation a speaker could be interrupted by the hearer and the turn-taking often reduces the amount of information that interlocutors share. Lack of interaction with another person encourages respondents to be more explicit. Yuan (2001) also states that DCTs rely on one-sided responses and do not allow for the negotiations between the participants which would take place in an authentic conversation. The considerable length of DCTs' responses in both written questionnaires and these administered orally, according to Yuan (ibid), can be explained in terms of the lack of interaction between the interlocutors: '(...) multiple turns become impossible unless a second-turn rejoinder is provided. As a result, respondents have to say everything in one turn, causing longer DCT responses than what is actually produced in natural speech, at least in the first turn' (Yuan 2001: 284). The length of a response does not need to be compromised and this problem can be solved by the questionnaire design (i.e. not providing dialogue-type questions but only scenarios with a question on participants response) and using some universally occurring situations and events, such as conversations with family or birthday parties. There can always be exceptions of participants who would not be familiar with such situations but these can be controlled according to the target group. Moreover, Jucker's (2009) and Yuan's (2001) claims regarding the length of the responses seem to be contradictory. On one hand, there is limited space to provide a response in a questionnaire (Jucker 2009), so the responses are shorter. On the other hand, the responses are long due to the absence of other interlocutors in the exchange (Yuan, 2001).

Questionnaires have also been argued to produce stereotyped and appropriate responses (Blum-Kulka et al, 1989) and formulaic semantic expressions (Cohen 1996) or stereotyped expressions of politeness (Tran 2006). However, this seems to be an advantage for exploring conventional use of speech acts, as mentioned earlier in this paragraph (see Section 2.3 for conventional uses of speech acts).

The second stage of the empirical study included collecting spoken data to compare the results with the written data and investigate whether the responses from written DCTs resemble those provided in authentic conversations and oral DCTs.

### **5.3.2 Spoken data collection**

The spoken data was collected to compare the findings of this research method with written data results and discuss potential similarities/ differences in responses. It is also important to analyse naturally occurring conversations (in non-scripted and semi-scripted radio interviews) and responses to pre-recorded scenarios (oral DCTs) as opposed to written responses collected through questionnaires. The assumption is that DCTs resemble naturally occurring conversations (See Section 5.3.1) and this characteristic of the DCTs is put to the test by comparing the findings with natural/ spontaneous exchanges. The spoken data collection results are also expected to address differences in what people say during a verbal exchange and what they think they would say while responding to DCTs.

Spoken data collection methods involving naturally occurring conversations seem to be the best data collection method for investigating the use of speech acts in authentic conversations. According to Wolfson and Manes (1980) the best data of this sort include samples of spontaneous speech occurring in natural settings when the interlocutors are not aware that they are being observed and listened to. However, spontaneous speech is rarely used in speech act research (Kasper and Dahl 1991, Beebe and Cummings 1996, Tran 2006, Félix-Brasdefer 2010). This is

due to the nature of tools used for spoken data collection and ethical considerations that have become stricter in the recent years making quality natural data collection very difficult to achieve. Spoken data collection methods tend to involve interviews or recordings and both of these require participants' prior consent. This means the collected data is no longer natural. Taking notes in such cases is not the same as recreating the conversation; it can be very difficult and raise accuracy issues (Beebe and Cummings, 1996). Moreover, the speech acts required for the study have to be elicited, otherwise they may not naturally appear in a conversation or during an interview and their frequency may not be high enough to allow for valid conclusions. Also, taking into consideration field notes and observations, researchers tend to be more alert to stereotyped/conventional uses of a speech act and may not always notice its other use (e.g. indirect) and this affects the results of the study (Jucker, 2009). While taking notes researchers also rely on their memory and often when writing down their observations their reports may be distorted and speech acts can be reported in more conventional way rather than, the way they have been uttered (Yuan 2001, Jucker 2009). This, together with transcribing conversations, makes this method very time consuming. Many sources also discuss using role play as an approximate equivalent to naturally occurring conversations and a follow up to DCTs (e.g. Golato, 2005). Role plays are believed to elicit longer and more elaborate exchanges than written questionnaires and therefore, resemble 'real-life' exchanges (Rintell and Mitchell, 1993). They also allow for controlling variables and can be replicated, similarly to DCTs.

To make the data as natural as possible this research uses a recording method of spoken data collection (oral DCTs), where pre-recorded instructions and tasks allow informants to put themselves into the situation described in the scenario and substitute authentic interaction between interlocutors, as informants can hear a real person's voice and recognize their gender and respond to this input accordingly. This research method was previously used by Yuan (2001) in her research on compliments, where oral responses to scenarios were recorded one by one after informants listened to the recordings at the researcher's home. The findings are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.



The set of recordings is complemented by a set of unscripted and semi-scripted radio interviews recorded from radio programmes that broadcast naturally occurring conversations between the interlocutors, normally around a specific subject, e.g. a recent event. This stage of the data collection also included the use of English and Polish corpora. A corpus is a collection of an authentic language material that lists a variety of examples of various phrases used in different contexts in different texts. The corpora included spoken data of conventional expressions of compliments and refusals that had been used by the participants in the written study (see Chapter 6). **Corpus data contributed to the discussion on institutionalised speech acts (see Chapter 2). Similarly to the data that can be obtained from field notes and observations, in the data corpus search the researcher could only look for the conventional/standard use of compliments and refusals, as their non-standardised uses cannot be listed and then looked up in the corpus.**

## **5.4 Research Concepts: Validity, Reliability and Ethics**

This section discusses important concepts in research, namely validity, reliability and ethical considerations in relation to the participants taking part in this study and the data collected.

Research validity relates to criteria of research quality that is carried out according to acceptable academic standards. Research validity is often defined as research trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity (Dörnyei, 2007: 48-50) and it concerns the overall research process. Validity is a situation specific concept that is relevant to a particular situation. There is a distinction in validity measurement that refers to the quality of interpretations, such as appropriateness and meaningfulness of the interpretation of results. A data collection method is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure. In this study data collection tools need to elicit specific speech acts.

Research validity has been achieved by carrying out a series of tests on the scenarios used in DCTs to ensure that they are as unambiguous as possible. Thus, scenarios from everyday life that are common, for instance, being invited to a party or social gathering, have been selected. It is important to ensure that informants are familiar with the potential situations as lack of familiarity with certain situations may well affect people's responses (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1986). The individuals described in the scenarios were given names (e.g. 'your neighbour John', instead of 'your neighbour') and their relationship to a respondent was specified (e.g. 'your neighbour John that you are friends with'), because the trial version of the scenarios created confusion and respondents were questioning the scenario instead of providing responses to them. For instance, when asked to refuse an invitation to attend their neighbour's barbeque, respondents were providing two responses: one about what they would say if they actually liked their neighbour and the other one about their response if they did not like him. Therefore, the neighbour from the scenario was replaced with 'your neighbour John that you are friends with' (see Appendices 1 and 2). This was an attempt to ensure valid by personalising the relationship.

Moreover, the nature of the study required the survey to be carried out in English and in Polish. Therefore, both surveys were designed to be as close as possible when translated from English to Polish and the other way round. **The scenarios were very simple to allow for clear responses.** Translation did not require any specialist language or explanation of words that may not be accessible in one of the languages. The names of individuals referred to in each scenario were chosen so that an equivalent can be found both in English and Polish. The English survey has used English names and the Polish survey a Polish equivalent of the same name to try and ensure that the respondents are familiar with the name and can work out the gender of a person in each scenario (For more information see Section 5.5.1 and Appendices 1-3).

Research reliability refers to the 'consistencies of data, scores or observations obtained using elicitation instruments, which can include a range of tools' (Chalhoub- Deville, 2006:2). In other words, reliability refers to the consistency

of the results produced using the data collection methods selected in a particular piece of research and its participants. If the research was recreated in different circumstances, for instance using different administrative procedures, such as, differences in the form of elicitation, the results should still be consistent.

Research validity and reliability can be ensured by some simple checks (Dörnyei 2007, Heigham and Croker 2009). For instance, it is worth comparing the results using other methods of data elicitation, e.g. written and spoken methods.

The reliability of this study has been achieved by carrying out several stages of the study design and informally testing the scenarios. The survey has been piloted on a group of 60 informants. The results have provided responses that are relevant to the aim of the study (See Chapter 6). Some interesting differences in complimenting and refusing behaviour in English and Polish group of informants have been observed (Chapter 6). The pilot study was developed into a longer survey with scenarios to investigate how meaningful the differences in both groups were and how well they translate onto a larger scale study. The sample of pilot study data turned out to be reliable enough to carry out the main study, providing more insights into the initially established assumptions about compliments and refusals (see Chapter 2). The findings of a written data collection have been compared with spoken data to investigate the similarities in responses. The aim of this comparison was to ensure the reliability of DCTs as a data collection method providing natural responses that resemble spoken language.

According to ethical considerations (e.g. BAAL, 2013), researchers should follow a set of rules, ethical considerations, to protect themselves and participants of the study from e.g. exploitation via obtaining permission and the use of anonymity from the scrutiny of other researchers involved (Denscombe 2006, Dörnyei, 2007, Heigham and Croker 2009, Bell 2010, Silverman 2010, Denzin and Lincoln 2011, BAAL 2013; see [Appendices 1 and 2](#) for examples of information sheet and questionnaires given to participants).

## 5.5 Study Design

### 5.5.1 Written Data Collection

Written data collection consisted of a survey that was designed specifically for the purpose of this study. The survey includes a pilot study and a main study in the form of a written questionnaire with a series of scenarios (see [Appendices 1 and 2](#)) that aimed to collect a sample of data to find out what differences and/ or similarities in responses from Polish and English respondents. The tasks were tested several times before the final set of scenarios was designed to ensure that the scenarios were unambiguous and easy to understand (See Section 5.4.1). Most of all, the tasks were designed to elicit specific speech acts and enable informants to recognise the type of speech act that was elicited and the relationship between the interlocutors in the scenario and respond to it accordingly.

Each scenario provided short outline/ description of a situation. Informants filled in an online questionnaire during the pilot study and a printed questionnaire during the main study. The questions were designed in Polish for Polish respondents and in English for English respondents. They were as close as they can be in those two languages. Scenarios used for both groups of participants were the same, but in different languages.

The responses were collected by the researcher and organized into tables. Respondents were each given a number (e.g. PL 1, PL 2, PL 3., ENG 1, ENG 2, ENG 3 ...) to keep them anonymous (See Section 5.4.1).

The tasks involved short scenarios with everyday situations (that are recognizable in English and Polish culture) in which respondents are required (a) to make a compliment, (b) communicate a refusal, (c) respond to a compliment, (d) respond to a refusal, (e) describe their emotional response and understanding of a situation in which a compliment/refusal has been responded to in a culturally preferred way and (f) [describe how each situation made them feel](#).

### a) Pilot study

A pilot study was carried out between July 2010 and March 2011 and it turned out to provide a satisfactory sample of data and was developed further into the main study to collect a larger sample of data and establish clearer patterns and regularities in responses.

During the pilot study respondents were asked to fill in a brief online questionnaire. DCTs used in this study consisted of four scenarios, two on complimenting behaviour and two on refusing behaviour (see Appendix 1). Respondents were asked to:

- 1) make a compliment,
- 2) respond to a compliment
- 3) communicate a refusal and
- 4) respond to a refusal.

Compliments referred to a possession (a coat) and appearance (haircut). Refusals referred to invitations (to a birthday party and to a barbeque). After each scenario informants were asked to say how they felt in each of the scenarios

Participants:

The study was carried out on two groups of respondents: one English and one Polish, with 30 participants in each group (60 respondents in total; see Table 5.1. next page):

Participants		
Nationality	English	Polish
Number	30	30
Age	18- 63	19-29
Gender	Female: 15 Male: 15	Female: 22 Male: 8
Occupation	Students: 11 Professionals: 19	Students: 11 Professionals: 19

Table 5. 1. Pilot Study: Overview of Participants

Target group for this study consisted of Polish respondents living and working or studying in Poland and English respondents living and working or studying in England. There was no age limit and the study was open to both genders.

### **b) Main Study**

The pilot study was later developed into the main study with more scenarios to collect more data that would build up on the initial findings and open the field for various comparisons of the results (see Appendix 2).

The main study included scenarios on complimenting and refusing behaviour. It was divided into two sections (section 1: compliments and section 2: refusals; see Appendix 2).

There were 8 scenarios in each of the sections with a total of 16 scenarios in the main study: 4 scenarios required making a compliment or refusal and 4 required a response to a compliment or refusal. Similarly to the pilot study, after each scenario respondents were asked to comment how they felt in each of the situations. The study was designed in Polish for Polish informants and in English for English informants and included the same scenarios for both groups. Polish respondents completed a printed out questionnaire and English respondents completed an online questionnaire.

Scenarios describing complimenting behaviour included compliments on an aspect of the hearer's appearance (a haircut, weight loss), achievement (passing driving test on the first attempt, getting an 'A' for an assignment), possession (a coat, mobile phone) and skills (baking skills, playing the guitar).

Scenarios describing refusing behaviour included refusals to an invitation (to a birthday party, to a barbeque), offer (to give a lift, to give a haircut), suggestion (to give an unprepared speech, to get a tattoo) and request (to watch a film in the cinema, to look after a pet dog).

Participants:

After the success of the pilot study which provided many interesting results, the main study targeted more English and Polish informants focusing on professionals and university students, preferably enrolled on courses that are not language or culture related. The data collection was carried out between March 2011 and August 2013. An overview of the informants' profile is shown in the Table 5.2. (below):

<b>Participants</b>		
<b>Nationality</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Polish</b>
<b>Number</b>	100	100
<b>Age</b>	18- 68 Female aged 18-46 Male aged 20-68	19- 26 Female aged 19-26 Male 19-23
<b>Gender</b>	61 Females 39 Males	68 Females 32 Males
<b>Occupation</b>	64 Students (BA English Language Studies, Marketing, Management, etc.) 36 Professionals	100 Students (BA Level 2, course: Management and Marketing)

Table 5. 2. Main Study DCTs: Overview of Participants

The English participants were selected among students at the University of Bedfordshire that were contacted via social networking sites and in person. Professionals were contacted online through social networking sites using a research group page created specifically for the purpose of the study. The Polish informants were selected among students at PWSZ, a higher education institution in Poland. The researcher was granted permission to access the institution and collect data during one of the plenary lectures.

The profile of the participants was complemented by the descriptive statistics analysis to calculate the average age of the participants and present an overview of the demographics (see Appendix 5).

### 5.5.2 Spoken Data Collection

Spoken data collection also involved two stages and aimed at collecting **verbal responses** to everyday social situations. The first stage included making a recording and the second stage included selecting a series of unscripted and semi-scripted radio interviews that would contain aspects of complimenting and refusing behaviour.

Spoken data collection also involved searching for the most commonly used phrases and their frequency of use in making compliments and refusals in Polish and English Linguistic Corpora. The phrases used to make compliments and refusals used in the search were based on the most frequent responses provided by respondents in DCTs (see Section 2.2 for institutionalised speech acts and **Appendix 4** for corpus data).

#### a) Recording

The first stage of spoken data collection required Polish and English participants to listen to pre-recorded tasks and respond to the situations by recording their response when prompted. The scenarios were the same for both groups but were recorded in different languages and included everyday social situations and resembled those in Discourse Completion Tasks used for the written data collection. There were four scenarios included in the recording: two on complimenting behaviour and two on refusing behaviour (see **Appendix 3**).

The aim of the pre-recorded instructions was to allow the informants to find themselves in the situation and make it as natural as possible and elicit required speech acts. After each scenario respondents were asked to say how each of them made their feel, similarly to written data collection.

Participants:

The study was open to participants Polish origin to be living and working or studying in Poland and informants of English origin to be living and working or studying in England. The participants' profile is presented in Table 5.3. (below).



<b>Participants</b>		
<b>Nationality</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Polish</b>
<b>Number</b>	10	10
<b>Age</b>	20- 35+	20- 29
<b>Gender</b>	7 Females 3 Males	8 Females 2 Males
<b>Occupation</b>	Students (4) and Professionals (6)	Students (2) and Professionals (8)

Table 5. 3. Recording: Overview of Participants

### b) Unscripted and Semi-scripted Radio Interviews

Unscripted and semi-scripted radio interviews were used in this research as part of the spoken data collection. While recordings were eliciting compliments, refusals and responses to them through a series of short everyday life situations, non-scripted and semi-scripted radio interviews include chunks of various conversations where compliments are used in a broader context. Often, several compliments are used in each interview. Refusals appear very rarely, possibly due to the face-threatening nature of this speech act, and tend to be only referred to in reported speech or as a description of a conversation that the speaker took part in some time in the past. Therefore, the study has only taken into consideration complimenting behaviour in this set of data.

There are two sets of interviews selected for the analysis, one set includes Polish interviews broadcast on Polish **commercial** radio stations (for instance Radio Zet, Polskie Radio Jedyńka), the other one contains English interviews broadcast on English **commercial** radio stations (e.g. BBC Radio 1, Capital Fm). A total of 380 minutes of recordings have been selected for the analysis: 190 minutes of Polish interviews in Polish and 190 minutes of English interviews in English (see Section 6 for the data). The Polish set of unscripted interviews contains 38 complimenting situations and the English set of data contains 45 complimenting situations. There were only 3 examples of refusals in each set of data. The interviews include both male and female participants. The overview of the radio interviews is presented in the table 5.4 (below):

<b>Radio interviews</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Polish</b>
<b>Number of interviews</b>	9	16
<b>Total length of recordings (in minutes)</b>	190	190
<b>Source</b>	BBC Radio 1, BBC Radio 2, Capital FM, Celebrity Radio	Radio Zet, Rmf fm, Polskie Radio Jedynka, Polskie Radio Trójka, Radio Zet
<b>Interviewees</b>	Celebrities: Comedian, Actors, Singer; Chef, Entrepreneur	Celebrities: Signers, Fashion designers, actors; Pilot, human right activist
<b>Compliments</b>	45	38
<b>Compliments responses</b>	45	38
<b>Refusals</b>	3	3

Table 5. 4. Radio Interviews: Overview

### c) Data Corpus

The Polish and English data corpus was investigated in order to examine examples of words and phrases conventionally used communicated in compliments and refusals (see Institutionalised Speech Acts in Section 2.3). The corpora search included spoken channel of data. The words and phrases used to make those two speech acts were selected on the basis of the responses provided in DCTs, recording and unscripted radio interviews. The list of the most commonly used phrases was checked against the examples found in the corpus to compare the frequency of use of chosen words and phrases used to express compliments and refusals (see examples in Appendices 4.1 and 4.2). On this basis, a list of the most commonly/ typically used expressions in English and Polish was composed to allow the comparison of the two cultures.

## 5.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the main characteristics of qualitative research in relation to the empirical stage of this research. The relevant research concepts include validity, reliability and ethical considerations. The data collection included two stages: pilot study collecting written data through DCTs; the main study involved collecting written and spoken data (recordings and radio interviews). The data was collected from two groups of informants (English and Polish) to compare the realisation of compliments and speech acts in both cultures. The selected research methods allowed for the investigation of the speech acts chosen in order to test the hypotheses about the similarities and differences in speech act realisation in the cultures of England and Poland and the emotions associated with these speech acts (see Section 5.1). Despite the samples of spontaneous speech being considered the best data for speech act research, their collection is rather complicated (see Section 5.3.2). Therefore, written and spoken DCTs seemed to provide the best compromise between questionnaires and observations of authentic conversations. The findings from written and spoken data collection methods are very systematic. The responses collected through both means are comparable, which supports the conclusion that the findings are reliable, in that, if the study was replicated, the results would be the same or very similar. The results of the empirical study are presented in the next chapter (Chapter 6).

## Chapter 6: The Data

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the data collected in the empirical part of the study. Section 6.2 focuses on the data classification in relation to previous studies on compliments and refusals (introduced in Chapter 2). The pilot study data is described in Section 6.3. Section 6.4 introduces the results of written data collection from the main study DCTs and Section 6.5 discusses the spoken data collection: English and Polish Corpora, recordings and unscripted and semi-scripted radio interviews. Each of the sections (Section 6.2 to 6.5) includes a comparison of English and Polish compliments and refusals highlighting the most striking observations in reference to Chapter 2 which discusses characteristics of compliments and refusals. The statistical analysis of the data based on correlation tests between the type of speech act (or response to a speech act) and the emotions triggered by it is presented in Section 6.6. Finally, a comparison of the written and spoken data collection and an overview of the findings are given in Section 6.7.

### 6.2 Data classification

This section presents the rationale for the classification of the responses collected in this research and an overview of the pilot study, carried out in order to investigate the patterns of responses to compliments and refusals and to test the validity of scenarios for the main study.

The patterns of responses were established on the basis of responses collected for the pilot study (discussed in Section 6.3 below) and compared with the classification of compliments and refusals as well as the responses to these speech acts described in the literature (see, e.g. Pomerantz 1978; Herbert, 1990; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Gass and Houck, 1999; see Section 2.5.3 for classification of compliments and 2.6.2 for classification of refusals). The choice

of the literature for the classification of speech acts is discussed in Section 2.3.1. On the basis of this comparison the following categories were established:

A) Making a compliment:

- 1) with direct reference to the compliment object (in scenarios where the object of the compliment is mentioned directly);
- 2) with indirect reference to the compliment object (in scenarios where the object of the compliment is not mentioned directly but may have been implied, often creating ambiguity)
- 3) other (alternative response or no compliment): this category was introduced to accommodate responses which did not fit into the initial two categories or situations where no compliment was made.

This classification was established on the basis of the types of compliments discussed in Section 2.6.3a.

B) Responding to a compliment:

- 1) Accepted (with three subcategories: directly, indirectly, accepted and returned)
- 2) Rejected (with two subcategories: directly and indirectly)
- 3) Returned only (in scenarios where a compliment was only returned without any other acknowledgement)
- 4) Ignored (in scenarios where there was no reference to the compliment in the response)

This category of responses initially investigated the responses categorised by Pomerantz (1978) into accepted and rejected (see Section 2.6.3b). However, due to the variety of types of responses, the initial categorisation was expanded and altered. Aspects of directness and indirectness of response were included, and the possibility that the compliment may be merely returned or ignored (i.e. not responded to as a compliment) was taken into account.

C) Making refusals:

1. Direct
2. Indirect
3. No refusal

This category includes direct and indirect types of refusals. The distinction is based on the literature on refusals (e.g. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Gass and Houck, 1999; [see Section 2.6.2 for more detailed discussion](#)). An additional subcategory of ‘no refusal’ was also introduced to investigate the potential cultural significance (i.e. types of social situations where respondents would not refuse for various reasons and what these reasons are) of the cases when participants did not make a refusal, as such examples were found in the pilot study data.

#### D) Responding to a refusal:

1. Favourable
2. Unfavourable
3. Mixed
4. Other/ Alternative response

Responses to refusals have been categorised to include positive (favourable) or negative (unfavourable) responses provided by the informants. Additional categories included mixed responses that were neither positive nor negative and alternative responses that did not fit into the other categories, such as when the refusal was ignored. [Types of responses to refusals were discussed in Section 2.6.2.](#)

#### E) [Emotions](#)

[This category includes emotions associated with the production and reception of compliments and refusals. Emotions](#) were initially categorised according to two types of emotional valence: positive and negative (Lewin, 1935; [see Section](#)

3.3.3). However, due to the greater variation of responses provided in the pilot study, two additional types have been introduced: neutral and mixed. Neutral emotional responses include responses where informants reported they did not feel anything or just that they 'felt normal'. Mixed responses were neither positive nor negative and included reference to both types of emotions. Some respondents did not specify their emotional reaction. For this reason some scenarios in recordings and radio interviews include an additional category of 'not specified' response.

Selected examples of responses in each category as provided by English and Polish respondents in the Main Study DCTs are given in Table 1.5 in Appendix 6.1. The investigation into the ways compliments and refusals made respondents feel provided some interesting insights into the impact of compliments and refusals on hearers (see Section 7. for more detailed discussion), which is then be compared with the functions of these speech acts discussed in literature presented in Chapter 2 (see also Section 6.3.1 for a discussion of function of compliments in relation to their positive emotional valence).

## **6.3 Pilot Study**

This section presents an overview of the data collected during the Pilot Study (see Appendices 1 and 6.2). This stage of the data collection has led to some interesting insights into the study and the initial observations gathered during the pilot study contributed to the development of the main study (e.g. relating to differences in the length of refusals made by English and Polish participants and to the link between refusals and positive emotions in English responses, as described in Section 6.4). The pilot study included a set of four scenarios: two on complimenting behaviour (one making a compliment and one responding to a compliment; Section 6.3.1) and two on refusing behaviour (one making a refusal and one responding to a refusal; Section 6.3.2). The study involved 60 participants (30 English and 30 Polish).

The data is presented in the Tables 1.6 to 1.9 (see Appendix 6.2). The most interesting observations based on this data are discussed below. These include comparisons of the responses of English and Polish participants in relation to the previous studies and the literature in the field, reviewed in Chapter 2.

### 6.3.1 Compliments

#### a) Making a compliment

Both English and Polish respondents showed a preference<sup>2</sup> for making compliments with direct reference to the compliment object (ENG 96.66%, PL 76.66%; see Table 1.6 Appendix 6.2). There were more examples of compliments with indirect reference to the compliment object among Polish respondents (7) than among English respondents (1), which is surprising as English culture is often perceived as more indirect than Polish culture (see Section 2.6.4). For example, when asked to compliment someone on their haircut, Polish people seem more likely than the English to say something like: *You look nice* (rather than: *Great hair*). The latter example was classified as a compliment with direct reference to the compliment object (see Table 1.5 in the Appendix 6.1 for more examples).

- Emotions associated with making a compliment:

Both groups of respondents associated making compliments with positive emotions (ENG 76.66%, PL 70%; See Table 1.6, Appendix 6.2), followed by neutral (and no emotions) responses (ENG 16.66%, PL 23.33%; *ibid*).

There was only one negative response in the Polish group (*ibid*).

#### b) Responding to a compliment

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<sup>2</sup> The word 'preference' refers to the frequency in the data as reported by the informants taking part in the study, rather than to people's attitudes and values.



English and Polish respondents showed a strong preference for compliment acceptance (PL 100%, ENG 96.66%; see Table 1.7, Appendix 6.2), for example by saying: *Thank you*. All compliments were accepted among Polish respondents; there was only one example of a rejected compliment in the English group (ENG 27: *Thanks, but it's actually really old!*). A compliment rejection in this example may be related to a self-praise avoidance strategy (see Section 4.7 for discussion of 'face') used when a hearer finds a compliment too intimidating or personal.. This response can also be interpreted as a form of conventionally polite false modesty, when the hearer does not want to be seen as flattered by the compliment, so he/she acknowledges it but at the same time shifts focus on the fact that the compliment object is actually not worth paying attention to. This does not mean that the compliment is not appreciated. Rather, the hearer wants to avoid being perceived as a person who is praising himself/herself and is very self-conscious of his/her appearance. However, this response can be face threatening to the speaker, because it indicates that the hearer does not agree with the compliment and speaker's judgement about the coat, so, he/she threatens the speaker's positive face while disagreeing with his/her opinion. The majority of compliments in both groups were accepted directly (ENG 90%, PL 83.33%; *ibid*). There were four examples of compliments accepted indirectly in the Polish group (e.g. PL30: *Oh come on! I thought I was the only one to like it!*) with only one example in the English group.

The majority of compliment responses in both groups were associated with positive emotions (ENG 90%, PL96.66%; see Table 1.7, Appendix 6.2) and mixed emotions came as second preference (ENG 6.66%, PL 3.33%; *ibid*). There was no evidence of negative emotions associated with responding to a compliment in this sample. While the association of compliment responses with positive emotions is unsurprising, a number of mixed emotions associated with compliments in this set of data is of some interest as it provides some insights into the complex ways compliments are perceived and the self-praise avoidance strategy as in Section 4.7 and illustrated by the following response:

ENG 14 *It felt great to get compliment from a friend, but I wouldn't want to focus on it too much so changed the subject slightly with where I got it from.*

This respondent appreciated the compliment that was paid but decided to shift the focus from the way it made her feel to providing more information about for the benefit of the hearer: *Thanks! I got it from.....they've got a great sale on...*

The prevalence of mixed emotions when responding to a compliment may reflect the complimentee's doubt in the complimenter's intention as shown in examples from the main study data collection (e.g. scenario on weight loss) (see also Section 6.4):

ENG 41 *Good but think it is probably not true* and ENG 55 *good but slightly bad that I must have looked larger before.*

### **c) Comparison: English and Polish compliments**

Both groups of respondents preferred making a compliment with direct reference to the compliment object and responding to a compliment with direct acceptance. Making and responding to compliments were associated with positive emotions.

Directness and indirectness of compliments was discussed in Section 2.6.4 and according to previous research (e.g. Lewandowska- Tomaszczyk 1989) English compliments tend to be more implicit. The small sample of data in the pilot study does not address this issue in detail, so a larger scale study was designed to test the hypothesis about English compliments being more indirect than Polish compliments (see Section 6.3). According to Pomerantz (1978), the preference for accepting compliments in both groups of respondents is a common strategy (see Section 2.6.3B). However, more recent studies (e.g. Lubecka 2000, Jaworski 1995, Lewandowska- Tomaszczyk 1989; see Section 2.6.4b) show that Polish compliments tend to be rejected more often than English compliments. Therefore, this phenomenon was investigated further on a larger sample of data to find out

whether there are regularities in patterns of responses between the pilot study and the main larger scale study (see Section 6.4).

Associating compliments with positive emotions by both groups of respondents seems rather uncontroversial and it relates to the description of this speech act as being part of positive politeness strategy building bonds between people (Wolfston and Manes, 1980; see Section 2.6). Many informants said that compliments made them feel approved of because they needed reassurance (and satisfaction from making a good decision) that their choice was noticed by others and felt appreciated and ‘fitting’ within a certain social group. However, the second highest number of responses after positive was mixed or neutral. The reasons for compliments being associated with emotions other than positive is very interesting and worth investigating further. This may relate to the functions of compliments, such as achieving goals or when compliments are perceived as too personal, as discussed by Spencer-Oatey (2004) (see also Section 2.6.2). The relation between associating compliments with emotions other than positive and their functions (other than social) may be context dependent and derive from the consideration of speaker’s intentions to achieve something (e.g. through using compliments as requests) over the hearer’s interpretation of a given compliment. When a hearer processes such compliment as a request, they tend to associate it with negative/ mixed emotions because it contradicts a general social expectation that compliments are expressions of admiration and face enhancing strategies rather than face threats. Participants in the study did not always see the compliment as face enhancing but often treated it with suspicion or as an intrusion, with some informants claiming that a compliment on a coat made them feel embarrassed, e.g.: ENG 15 *Embarrassed but happy*. The responses also provided some insights into the perception of compliments in a given society, for instance when one of the Polish respondents said that she was happy to hear the compliment, especially that it came from her female friend, because - in her view - female to female compliments are more honest:

PL 10: *It was nice to hear a compliment about my coat, especially that it was made by a girlfriend. Women's compliments are in general honest ;)).*

This was also evidenced by the main study (see Section 6.4). Therefore, more scenarios on complimenting behaviour were included in the main data collection (see Section 6.4).

### 6.3.2 Refusals

#### a) Making a refusal

Both groups of respondents had a preference for making direct refusals (ENG 66.66%, PL 60%; see Table 1.8, Appendix 6.2), e.g. ENG 21: *Sorry, I can't. I've already said I will go to my cousins wedding*. Indirect refusals (e.g. ENG 29: *Sorry Paul, I have to go to a family wedding*) came as a second preference (ENG 33.33%, PL 40%); See Table 1.4, *ibid*) and there were none of the respondents refused to make a refusal.

- Emotions associated with making a refusal:

Responses about emotions associated with making a refusal show greater variation between the cultures of England and Poland (see Table 1.8, Appendix 6.2 and discussion in Chapter 7). Polish respondents associate making a refusal with negative emotions (63.33%); mixed responses (26.66%) came as the second preference. English respondents associate making a refusal with negative emotions (40%) together with positive emotions (36.66%). There were no examples of positive emotions associated with making refusals in the Polish group. This point is discussed in more detail in Section 6.4 where more data is presented.

## **b)                Responding to a refusal**

English respondents showed a strong preference<sup>3</sup> for favourable responses (with positive connotations) to refusals (70%; see Table 1.9, Appendix 6.2; e.g. ENG 26: *Don't worry. There'll be lots of other times. Have a good time*) and mixed responses (neither negative nor positive) came as a second preference (30%, *ibid*; e.g. ENG 17: *That's too bad, I was looking forward to seeing you, no worries though, enjoy your time away and we'll catch up when you get back*). Polish respondents showed strong preference for mixed responses to refusals (60%, *ibid*) and favourable responses came as the second preference (33.33%, *ibid*). There were only two Polish respondents (and no English respondents) who gave unfavourable responses to a refusal (e.g. PL 22: *Shame, Your loss*).

- Emotions associated with responding to a refusal:

English respondents associated responding to a refusal with positive emotions (60%), whereas Polish respondents associated responding to a refusal with negative emotions (36.66%). There was a wider distribution of various responses in the Polish group with positive, neutral and mixed emotions, having all similar scores (see Table 1.9, *ibid*).

## **c)                Comparison: English and Polish refusals**

When making a refusal English and Polish respondents showed a preference for direct refusals (see Table 1.8, Appendix 6.2). Emotions associated with making a refusal differ in the two groups. Only English informants associated making a refusal with positive emotions. This group has also provided comparatively favourable feedback on responses to refusals (Polish informants' responses were mixed, i.e. neither favourable nor unfavourable).

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<sup>3</sup> Preference in this case relates to the general tendency of having certain emotions in a given situation

There were also differences in the emotions associated with responding to a refusal. English informants described their emotions in positive terms, and Polish respondents in negative.

Similarly to compliments (see Section 6.2.2b above) the participants in the pilot study showed a preference for making direct refusals, which seems to go against the widely held view that English culture is more indirect (see Section 2.6.4). Due to the small sample of respondents in the pilot study, this issue was addressed in more detail in the main study (see Section 6.4).

Associating refusals with positive emotions by English informants goes against the general tendency to describe this speech act as face threatening (see Section 2.7). This observation is very interesting, as refusals usually evoke negative emotions (see Section 2.7 and Chapter 7 for more detailed discussion). The reasons for refusals being seen in positive terms seems worth investigating in more detail to find out the reasons for this difference between the perception of English and Polish informants.

The results of the pilot study were very interesting and they informed the further investigation into the issue of the preference for direct or indirect realisations of speech acts and emotions associated with compliments and refusals in both cultures. These observations were the starting point for the main study (presented in Section 6.4).

## **6.4 Main Study: Written Data Collection (DCTs)**

This section presents an overview of the data collected in the Main Study (Appendices 2 and 6.3). There were 200 respondents taking part in the survey (100 English and 100 Polish) and they provided responses to sixteen scenarios: eight on compliments (Section 6.4.1) and eight on refusals (Section 6.4.2). Section 6.4.1 discusses the findings on English and Polish compliments and responses to compliments, highlighting the differences between the two groups of informants

and the most interesting observations. Section 6.4.2 discusses refusals and responses to refusals. This set of data is compared the pilot study findings presented in Section 6.3 (above) and those from the literature (See Chapter 2).

### **6.4.1 Compliments**

#### **a) Making a compliment**

Similarly to the pilot study findings (see Section 6.3), in the main study data English and Polish respondents showed a strong preference for making compliments with direct reference to the compliment object (ENG 67.5%, PL 81.25%; see Table 6.1, below). Compliments with indirect reference to the compliment object came as a second preference in both groups (ENG 28.5%, PL 15.5%, *ibid*). This finding differs from the pilot study data where the number of responses with indirect reference to the object of the compliment was noted in the Polish sample (see Section 6.3.1). This observation seems consistent with the widely held view that indirectness is typical of English culture (see Chapter 2). Making compliments directly, however, may be associated with the preference for conventional compliments in both groups as these are more recognised socially and are often more appropriate (see Sections 2.3 for institutionalised speech acts and 2.6 for definitions and functions of compliments and Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion).

Both groups of informants associated compliments with positive emotions (ENG 86%, PL 67.5%, *ibid*). This is consistent with the findings of the pilot study about the general preference for compliments to be associated with positive emotions. However, the second highest number of responses in this category differs in each group. In the English group of informants negative and mixed emotions came as the second, much lower, preference (negative 5.25% and mixed 4.75%; see Table 6.1 below). In the Polish group the second preferred response associated with making compliments was neutral (20.25%, see Table 1.7, Appendix 6.2) with

fewer negative responses (only 9%, see Table 1.7, Appendix 6.2). These two preferences are still much higher than in the English group. Altogether, in the Polish group nearly 30% of responses were other than positive, in comparison to only 10% in the English group. This means that Polish respondents tend to see compliments not only as having the primary function of creating social bonds and solidarity (Holmes 1984, Wolfston 1983) but also satisfying the speaker's other goals, i.e. asking for more information that can be conveyed in a compliment (e.g. *Where does one get such lovely shoes?*). Compliments in Polish culture are often institutionalised speech acts that are 'reflex like' or 'habitual' and they are often perceived as insincere and associated with jealousy rather than admiration (Lewandowska- Tomaszczyk 1989, Czernawska 2009). Thus, Polish speakers tend to be more suspicious about receiving compliments and these are not always seen in positive terms, which can also be the case in other cultures. In this case this seems to be a plausible explanation for the variety of responses provided by this group of respondents (see Chapter 7 for more detailed discussion), where complimentees try to negotiate their own face needs and that of the complimenter. This can be explained in terms of relevance in the context of situation. In certain situations a conventional compliment is recognised as sincere, perhaps because of the relationship between interlocutors (e.g. when made by a close friend) but the same compliment can be seen as suspicious when made a stranger on a street or by someone's boss, because it might raise a variety of other possible interpretations that go beyond the standardised use of compliments for conveying solidarity.

Despite being associated with building social bonds and creating an atmosphere of solidarity (Holmes 1984, Lubecka 2000; see Section 2.6) and generally being face enhancing, compliments can also be face threatening. This affects the emotions that they are associated with. When the sincerity of compliments is questioned, they give rise to suspicions about whether what is said is actually meant or is said to achieve some other goals. The sincerity of compliments is questioned as there is a tendency to be a 'habitual complimenter', to pay compliments out of fulfilling a social convention, which comes with the risk of being perceived as insincere.



COMPLIMENTS		Making a compliment	
		English Data (400)	Polish Data (400)
Types	Direct Reference to Compliment Object	270 (67.5%)	325 (81.25%)
	Indirect Reference to Compliment Object	114 (28.5%)	62 (15.5%)
	Other (Lack of compliment)	16 (4%)	13 (3.25%)
Emotions	Positive	344 (86%)	270 (67.5%)
	Negative	21 (5.25%)	36 (9%)
	Neutral (or no emotions)	16 (4%)	81 (20.25%)
	Mixed	19 (4.75%)	16 (4%)

Table 6. 1. Main Study. Making compliments: English and Polish Data Comparison

There are some differences in responses to particular scenarios in the collected sample. In the English data, the scenarios with a compliment on appearance (a haircut) and on a skill (playing the guitar) have shown a relatively low preference for compliments with either direct or indirect reference to the compliment object, as opposed to other scenarios which had a preference to compliments with direct reference to the compliment object (see Figure 6.1 and 6.2, Appendix 6.3.1). This again can be explained by compliments being seen as conventional (see Section 2.3). Institutionalised compliments consist of set, formulaic, expressions, such as *Nice haircut*, which directly refer to the compliment object. They are often paid because the situation requires it, rather than being spontaneous expressions of the speaker's appreciation of a quality or possession of the hearer (in this instance a new haircut). Thus, they are often interpreted as expressions of politeness rather than genuine compliments and associated with rather mixed (or often negative emotions) because conventional compliments are relevant in virtue of conveying assumptions about the speaker's positive social disposition towards the hearer

rather than in virtue of the speaker's positive evaluative evaluation of the compliment object, which is easily perceived as lack of sincerity. This relates to the social function of compliments used to enhance face and build solidarity bonds, but it neglects the impact of the compliment on the hearer.

This is also observed in the scenario on a compliment on personal possessions (a new mobile phone; see Figure 6.3, *ibid*) where there were quite a few negative perceptions despite the strong general preference for compliments being associated with positive emotions.

Similarly to the English data, there are some differences in responses to some specific scenarios in the Polish set of data. There were more responses with indirect reference to the compliment object in the scenario complimenting on a skill (playing the guitar; see Figure 6.4, Appendix 6.3.2) than in any other scenario (similar to the English set of data responses in the same scenario). Some differences in emotions associated with compliments were also observed. There were more negative emotional responses in the scenario on making a compliment on a possession (a new mobile phone; see Figure 6.5, *ibid*) and in the scenario complimenting on an achievement (passing a driving test; see Figure 6.6, *ibid*) than in any other scenario. Also, the two scenarios (on complimenting a new mobile phone and passing driving test at the first attempt) had more neutral emotional responses. These differences can be attributed to the concept of jealousy associated with compliments on possessions or achievements (Jaworski, 1995) and this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 (Section 7.3a).

## **b) Responding to Compliments**

Both groups of respondents showed a strong preference for accepting compliments (ENG 87.75%, PL 91%, see Table 6.2 below). The majority of compliments were accepted directly (ENG 64%, PL 73%). This can be attributed to the conventional use of compliments (see Section 6.4.1a) which also involved conventional responses, and these include acceptance, i.e. acknowledging the

compliment and confirming solidarity with the speaker (Oleksy, 1989). Also, acceptance and agreement with the compliment are among the most frequent responses to this speech act (Pomerantz 1978, see Section 2.6.3b). The percentage of compliments accepted indirectly is higher in English group (20.25%) with only 13% in the Polish group. Again, this finding is consistent with the view that indirectness is generally preferred in English culture (see Section 2.5.4a). Although the literature suggests that compliment rejections are associated with Polish culture (Lubecka, 2000), in the present study more compliments were rejected in by English respondents (8.75%), in contrast to only 4% of rejections in the Polish group. The majority of rejected compliments were rejected indirectly in the English group and (5.75%) directly (2.75%) in the Polish group. This observation is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 (see Section 7.3c).

Responses to compliments were associated with positive emotions in both groups of informants (ENG 78.5%, PL 84.25%), with 12.25% of negative responses in the English group and only 5.5% in the Polish group. There was an equal distribution of responses other than positive in the Polish group. Associating compliments with negative emotions was again more typical of the Polish group according to the literature (Czernawska 2009, Jaworski 1995), but the data collected for the present study showed the opposite: English respondents have given more negative responses. There are two scenarios in particular that triggered these responses: responses to compliments on weight loss and high assignment grade (see Table 1.10, Appendix 6.3.3). These two scenarios have also produced the most negative responses in the Polish data (See Table 1.11, *ibid*). This is potentially due to the jealousy factor. Losing weight and getting high grades brings an element of a competition and currently seems to be very desirable, and brings up jealousy in people, therefore, complimenting someone on achieving something that others didn't, is seen in negative terms.

COMPLIMENTS			Responding to a compliment	
			English Data (400)	Polish Data (400)
Types	Accepted	Directly	256 (64%)	292 (73%)
		Indirectly	81 (20.25%)	52 (13%)
		and Returned	14 (3.5%)	20 (5%)
	<b>Total Accepted</b>		351 (87.75%)	364 (91%)
	Rejected	Directly	12 (3%)	11 (2.75%)
		Indirectly	23 (5.75%)	5 (1.25%)
	<b>Total Rejected</b>		35 (8.75%)	16 (4%)
	<b>Returned Only</b>		0	0
	<b>Ignored/ Other</b>		14 (3.5%)	16 (4%)
Emotions	<b>Positive</b>		314 (78.5%)	337 (84.25%)
	<b>Negative</b>		49 (12.25%)	22 (5.5%)
	<b>Neutral</b>		7 (1.75%)	19 (4.75%)
	<b>Mixed</b>		30 (7.5%)	22 (5.5%)

Table 6. 2. Main Study. Responding to compliments: English and Polish Data Comparison

As in the scenarios on making compliments, there were some differences in responses to specific scenarios with responses to compliments. The most varied responses in both groups were given in the scenario that required making a compliment on baking skills (in comparison to the responses given in other scenarios; see Table 1.10 for English data and 1.11 for Polish data, Appendix 6.3.3). In both groups there was a nearly equal distribution of direct and indirect acceptances to the compliment. This scenario also has the highest score of responses dismissing (or ignoring) the compliment. An explanation for this might

be that compliment is interpreted in as an implicit or covert request (for a more detailed discussion see Section 7.4).

Moreover, two scenarios in the English set of data elicited a relatively high number of rejected compliments: responding to compliments on achievements: weight loss (see Figure 6.7, Appendix 6.3.3) and good assignment grade (See Figure 6.8, *ibid*). The same two scenarios also have the highest number of negative responses to these compliments. See point (b) above for a more detailed discussion.

There are also two scenarios in the Polish set of data that some responses were more popular in comparison to the others. The first of these is the compliment on weight loss (Figure 6.9, Appendix 6.3.3). This scenario had the highest number of rejected compliments and the highest number of negative emotional responses. The second one is the baking skills scenario (Figure 6.10, *ibid*), which showed the widest range of responses. This scenario was the only one in the set of data that has shown some regularity in both groups of informants. The example is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

#### **6.4.2 Refusals**

As in the pilot study, the scenarios with refusals, provided the most varied responses in the two groups of informants, especially in terms of emotions associated with refusing behaviour. The examples of these are discussed below.

##### **a) Making a refusal**

English and Polish informants showed a preference for making direct refusals (see Table 6.3 below). There were, however, more examples of indirect refusals (29.5%) in the English data than in the Polish data (19.75%). Polish respondents associated refusals mainly with negative emotions (60%), whereas English

respondents' responses were divided between negative (41.25%) and positive (41%). The percentage of positive emotional responses in the English group (41%) was considerably higher than in the Polish group (14.75%).

REFUSALS		Making a Refusal	
		English Data	Polish Data
Types	Direct	280 (70%)	314 (78.5%)
	Indirect	118 (29.5%)	79 (19.75%)
	No refusal	2 (0.5%)	7 (1.75%)
Emotions	Positive	164 (41%)	59 (14.75%)
	Negative	165 (41.25%)	240 (60%)
	Neutral (or no emotions)	34 (8.5%)	53 (13.25%)
	Mixed	37 (9.25%)	18 (4.5%)

Table 6. 3. Main Study. Making Refusals: English and Polish Data Comparison

Similarly to the data on compliments, there are some minor differences between the responses provided to some specific scenarios, for instance to a scenario with making a refusal to a request to look after a pet dog (see Table 1.12, Appendix 6.3.4). The responses provided for this scenario were the most striking in this data set with the highest number of direct refusals that were made (91%). Direct refusals have resulted in the highest number of positive emotions being reported in this scenario.

In the Polish data, the highest number of direct refusals (89%) was reported in the birthday party invitation scenario (see Table 1.13, *ibid*). The same scenario had also the lowest number of indirect refusals (10%). There were some instances of no refusal being made in the scenario with a request to look after a pet dog (6%).

The highest number of positive emotions (68%) was reported in the scenario about responding to an offer of a tattoo. In this situation, the refusal seems to have

been easiest for the respondents to make without taking offence about the offer, (e.g. PL15: *I was happy to have my own opinion*). This situation was rather unusual (i.e. it was not something that people are likely to come across in everyday life often) and might have taken some participants by surprise (see English Data in Table 1.12 and Polish Data in Table 1.13, *ibid*), e.g. PL11 *No, thanks. I haven't made up my mind yet*. A reasonable explanation for this is that this offer can be perceived as inappropriate. It involves a very personal suggestion, which concerns what is perceived to be part of the hearer's private personal sphere. Thus, this offer shows disregard for personal autonomy. Although, offers can enhance hearers' positive face, as they may imply the speaker's approval of the hearer, they also threaten his/her negative face associated with autonomy (e.g. in accepting an offer the hearer may accept an imposition). An offer of a tattoo may easily threaten the hearer's autonomy (physical and psychological). Hence, the direct refusal may be interpreted as an expression of her/his rights as a person. An exception would be a situation where the hearer is a tattoo enthusiast and would love to add a new one to his/her collection, but has to refuse because, for instance, the timing of this offer is bad (e.g. he/she does not have any money or has not decided on the type of tattoo he/she would like to have).

The lowest number of responses that reflected participants' positive emotions (29%) was recorded in the scenario where informants had to respond to a suggestion to get a haircut. The lowest number of neutral emotions (5%) was recorded in the scenario on responding to a refusal to a birthday party invitation.

Another interesting observation is about the length of refusals and responses to refusals in both groups of respondents. There is a tendency for refusals to be quite long and they often include explicit apologies and several alternatives: e.g.

Main DCTs data

- ENG 22 *Hi Paul, I'm very sorry but I have to attend my cousin's wedding on the same and that's too far away to make it to both events. Sorry, I promise to catch up with you later* [136 characters]

- PL 77: *Forgive me, but I can't make it. It turned out that it's my cousin's wedding and the invitation came with a bit of delay. We will celebrate it when I'm back, ok?* [Wybacz, ale nie dam rady. Okazało się, że mój kuzyn ma wesele i zaproszenie przyszło z lekkim opóźnieniem. Opijemy twoje urodziny jak wrócę, ok =120 characters]

#### Recordings data

- PL 7: *I'm really sorry but unfortunately I can't come to your party because it turned out that my cousin's wedding is on the same day and unfortunately, I can't refuse him.* [Bardzo Cię przepraszam, ale niestety nie mogę przyjść na twoje przyjęcie, ponieważ, no akurat tak wypadło, że w ten sam dzień jest ślub mojego kuzyna no i niestety nie mogę mu odmówić =152 characters]
- ENG 3: *I'm really sorry Paul. I'm not going to be able to make it as it's my cousin's wedding on the same day. I promise to make it up to you, though. Maybe I can take you out for dinner or for lunch one day.* [158 characters]

There are hardly any one word responses (as in case of compliments when respondents often just say *Thanks*, or make a compliment using an adjective and a noun: *Nice haircut*). This is also true of the spoken data collection, in the results of recordings presented in Section 6.5 below.

The length of DCT and oral DCT responses has been commented on by researchers in the past (Yuan 2001, Jucker 2009; See Chapter 5). Jucker (2009) argues that one of the disadvantages of DCTs is that the space provided for the response limits participants and automatically sets up responses to be shorter than in real-life exchanges. This is confirmed by Yuan (2001) whose research results confirm that oral responses are much longer than written responses (Yuan 2001: 278). However, this is not the case in the set of data collected in this research where written and spoken responses are of comparable length (based on the number and explicitness of mitigating devices used, see Chapters 2 and 6). Longer responses in written questionnaires can be explained by the lack of interaction between participants in a DCT scenario, i.e. the absence of the interlocutor



encourages the speaker to provide a longer, uninterrupted response (Yuan 2001). However, on the basis of the character count the spoken responses are much longer than written DCTs. The comparison of the length of responses was carried out on a scenario with making a refusal on a birthday party invitation. The character count for the main set of data was 6468 in the Polish group with an average of 64.68 character per informant and 4749 in the English group, with an average of 47.49. This makes Polish responses longer than English. In comparison to the spoken data (recordings) the length of English responses is 1669 in total (average of 166.9 character per informant) and the Polish total is 1652 (average 165.2). Oral responses are of comparable length in both groups. The spoken responses are longer than DCTs and this supports the prediction by Jucker (2009) and Yule (2001).

#### **b) Responding to a Refusal**

Responding to a refusal in both sets of data is associated with favourable responses (with positive connotations: ENG 75.75%, PL 39%; see Table 6.4 page 158). However, in the Polish data the score in this category is much lower than in the English data. Unfavourable responses contribute 23.25% of the responses in this group in comparison to only 5% in the English group. The Polish set of data provides a relatively even distribution of responses in each category.

The main difference between the two groups is in the emotions associated with responding to refusals. English respondents associate responding to refusals with positive emotions (68.25%), whereas, Polish respondents with negative emotional responses (44.75%). Similarly to the pilot study data (see Section 6.3.2) English respondents do not seem to take offence when faced with a refusal. They are more understanding of the reasons for a refusal than Polish respondents who do not take refusals as an attack on them and their relationship with a hearer but instead, look at it more objectively from the point of view of the speaker and his/her reasons for make the refusal.

REFUSALS		Responding to Refusals	
		English Data	Polish Data
<b>Types</b>	<b>Favourable</b>	303 (75.75%)	156 (39%)
	<b>Unfavourable</b>	20 (5%)	93 (23.25%)
	<b>Mixed</b>	18 (4.5%)	69 (17.25%)
	<b>Alternative response (indifferent, unclassified)</b>	59 (14.75%)	82 (20.5%)
<b>Emotions</b>	<b>Positive</b>	273 (68.25%)	100 (25%)
	<b>Negative</b>	62 (15.5%)	179 (44.75%)
	<b>Neutral (or no emotions)</b>	43 (10.75%)	86 (21.5%)
	<b>Mixed</b>	22 (5.5%)	35 (8.75%)

Table 6. 4. Main Study. Responding to Refusals: English and Polish Data Comparison

This set of data also includes differences in the types of responses to particular scenarios. Only two scenarios were responded to in unfavourable terms in the English set of data: a refusal on the suggestion to watch a film and the request to give speech (see Table, 1.14, Appendix 6.3.4). The same two scenarios have the highest number of negative emotions associated with a refusal. Possible reasons for this finding may be related to the scenario: giving a speech is more face-threatening than offering cinema tickets, as it puts the hearer on the spot and makes him/her aware of the importance of the situation. Responding to a refusal on going to a cinema on a film that a hearer has already seen can be more upsetting in personal terms as it threatens the relationship between the participants one if whom has already seen the film with another person. Here, the fact that the film that has already been seen by the hearer can be more upsetting than the refusal itself and it can create an atmosphere of jealousy that the hearer watched the film with somebody else despite having talked about it earlier with the speaker. The number of negative emotions associated with this scenario was high in the Polish group of informants as well (see Table 1.15, Appendix 6.4.3). The

highest number of alternative responses to a refusal (i.e. responses other than a favourable, unfavourable or mixed response to a refusal) in English group was given to the scenario where respondents had to respond to a refusal on an offer of a lift (27%). In this scenario respondents usually insisted on giving a lift rather than just accepting the refusal. This scenario also had the highest number of neutral responses (17%).

There are some differences in selected scenarios in the Polish data (see Table, 1.15, Appendix 6.3.4). Although the overall tendency is for responses to refusals to be favourable, in the scenario on refusing in response to a request to give a speech, respondents have shown a preference for an alternative response (34%). **In the offer of a lift scenario, Polish participants insisted on giving a lift rather than accepting the reasons for a person to refuse it. This could be related to the concept of ‘ecological rationality’ (Gigerenzer and Todd 1999, Pham 2007) and the discussion of emotions as commitments (Frank, 1988) introduced in Chapter 3 (Section 3.5). From the point of view of social obligations, the decision making process in this situation (accepting the hearer’s refusal of an offer of a lift) was affected by some norms of appropriate behaviour, which did not allow the speaker to accept the refusal which would be rational in the absence of such a norm. The rational behaviour would be to accept the refusal (as the speaker’s face was already threatened by his/her offer being rejected). However, for some respondents in this situation, insisting on offering the lift may be ecologically rational because of their assumption that the acceptance of the refusal would violate a social norm and that the negative consequences of this would be greater than those presented by the repeated offer.**

## **6.5 Main Study: Spoken Data Collection**

This section presents an overview of the results of spoken data collection, including recordings (Section 6.5.1) and unscripted and semi-scripted radio interviews (Section 6.5.2). **This stage of the data collection was included in the study so spoken and written data can be compared in order to show whether the**

main method chosen (written DCTs) provides reliable results and resembles spoken conversations (see Chapter 5). The comparison of the results of the written and spoken data is presented in the following section (see also Section 6.7 and Appendix 8).

### **6.5.1 Recordings**

There were 20 respondents taking part in the recordings (10 English and 10 Polish) and they provided responses to four scenarios: two on compliments (Section a) and two on refusals (Section b). The findings presented below include the most interesting observations that differ from the established patterns of responses.

#### **a) Compliments**

##### **Making a compliment**

Both sets of data show a preference for making a compliment with direct reference to the compliment object (see Table 6.5, below). Both groups of respondents associate compliments with positive emotions. There is only one example of negative emotional response in the group of English respondents. These results corroborate the findings of the written data collection (see Section 6.4.1).

COMPLIMENTS		Making a compliment	
		PL respondents (10)	ENG respondents (10)
Types	Direct Reference to the Object	9	9
	Indirect Reference to the Object	1	1
	Other (Lack of compliment)	0	0
Emotions	Positive	8	7
	Negative	0	1
	Neutral (or no emotions)	0	0
	Mixed	2	1
	Not specified	0	1

Table 6. 5. Recordings. Making a Compliment: English and Polish Data

A couple of interesting responses that stand out in the data set include examples of indirect compliments:

- 1) ENG (10): *I can see who's going to take me to work tomorrow*
- 2) PL (7): *Naprawde zdales prawo jazdy? I to za prviwszym razem? No to super bardzo sie ciesze. [Have you really passed you driving test? And on the first attempt? Well, great. I'm very happy.- translated by JB]*

Them indirect compliment in (1) refers to the way the speaker will benefit from the hearer's achievement, whereas, in (2), the compliment is in the form of a question, which somehow indicates that the speaker has some doubts about the hearer's achievement.

Another interesting example in the English group of informants involves making a compliment associated with negative emotions: (ENG 8) *I would feel a little bit worried for a friend. This respondent made a compliment (I would congratulate my friend on passing his test but would give him advice to be careful on the roads) and also warned the recipient about keeping safe on the roads, hence the concern about the new driver expressed in the response about his emotions in this*

situation. The association of compliments with negative emotions was noted before in the Polish set of DCTs data (see Section 6.4.1).

### Responding to a compliment

There is a preference for accepting compliments directly in both groups of respondents (see Table 6.6 below) and responding to a compliment is associated with positive emotions in both groups. These results are similar to the written data collection findings (see Section 6.4.2 and Appendix 8).

COMPLIMENTS			Responding to a compliment	
			PL respondents (10)	ENG respondents (10)
Types	Accepted	Directly	9	9
		Indirectly	0	1
		and Returned	0	0
	<u>Total Accepted</u>		9	10
	Rejected	Directly	1	0
		Indirectly	0	0
	<u>Total Rejected</u>		1	0
	Returned Only		0	0
	Ignored		0	0
Emotions	Positive		8	9
	Negative		1	1
	Neutral		0	0
	Mixed		1	0

Table 6. 6. Recordings. Responding to a Compliment: English and Polish Data

Only one example of an indirect response to a compliment was recorded in the group of English respondents, ENG 3: *Isn't it just? I've picked it up in a charity shop the other day.* Also, there was only one example of rejected compliment in the Polish group of respondent; the compliment is rejected directly: (PL 9) *Tomek, idz ty. Plaszcz Baltazara. Mam juz go od 4 lat. Dopiero teraz go zauwazyles?* [Tom, get out of here. That's Balthazar's coat. I've had it for 4 years. Have you noticed it only now?].

One participant in each group associated a compliment response with negative emotions:

- 1) PL (9): *Bylem zdziwiony, poniewaz w tym plaszczu chodze juz od jakiegos czasu.* [I was surprised, because I have been wearing this coat for a while now]
- 2) ENG (10): *Weird, I'm not used to compliments*

Mixed emotions associated with responding to a compliment were reported only in the Polish group: PL 1: *Poczulam sie glupio, poniewaz zawsze robi mi sie glupio jak ktos mowi mi cos milego, ale jednoczesnie bylo mi bardzo miło* [I felt foolish, but I always feel foolish when someone says something nice to me, but at the same time, I was pleased.]

## **b) Refusals**

### **Making a Refusal**

Both groups of respondents show a preference for making direct refusals (all respondents, see Table 6.7 below). Polish informants tend to have negative emotional responses after making a refusal, whereas English informants tend to have mixed emotions; i.e. they often say that they feel guilty but fine at the same time, e.g. because they offered to make up for not being able to attend (ENG 3: *I felt a little bit awkward obviously because maybe I could have told him sooner. But then there was a gesture to make up for it so it might have felt a little bit*

*better making the gesture. ) or they believe that their reason to make a refusal was ‘good enough’ (ENG 7: I felt bad for not being able to go but I felt like I had a good enough reason not to). These findings are very similar to those in the written data.*

REFUSALS		Making a Refusal (Birthday Party)	
		PL respondents (10)	ENG respondents (10)
Types	Direct	10	10
	Indirect	0	0
	No refusal	0	0
Emotions	Positive	2	1
	Negative	7	3
	Neutral	0	0
	Mixed	1	6

Table 6. 7. Recordings. Making a Refusal: English and Polish Data

Although refusals are conventionally associated with negative responses (See Section 2.7), there are some examples in the data set of them being described in positive terms, similarly to the written data (see Section 6.4.3):

- 1) PL 7: *Coz akurat sie tak zlozylo, ze dwie imprezy sa w jednym dniu i musialam wybrac gdzie pojde. No i niestety slub okazal soe dla mnie wazniejszym wydarzeniem. [Well, it just happened that 2 parties were on the same day and I have to choose where to go. But unfortunately (for my friend), the wedding turned out to be a more important event to me.]*
- 2) PL 9: *Takie sytuacje zdarzaja sie z zyciu i czasem trzeba cos wybrac. [These kinds of situation happen in life and sometimes we have to choose one thing over something else].*  
  
ENG 10: *Fine, I had to be at that wedding, doesn't happen often that two parties clash*



These responses show some understanding of the respondents about the speaker's reasons for making a refusal rather than taking offense. Generally, the responses of English informants seem to be more positive than those of Polish participants. These two Polish responses do not seem to have any negative connotations. It seems that the informants are aware that they had to make a choice and that is something that often happens in life, so there is no reason to be particularly upset about it. It seems that certain choices were much more undesirable than others.

Similarly to the written data, the results of the recordings show a preference for giving considerably long refusals that often include several apologies and offer alternatives as in the following examples:

- 1) ENG 3: *I'm really sorry Paul. I'm not going to be able to make it as it's my cousin's wedding on the same day. I promise to make it up to you, though. Maybe I can take you out for dinner or for lunch one day.*
- 2) PL 5: *Hi Paul, I'm sorry but I can't come to your birthday, because I have already confirmed going to my cousin's wedding, which is on the same day that your birthday. I hope that we can meet up for coffee some time to talk. You won't hold it against me, this birthday..* [Cześć Paweł, przykro mi, ale nie mogę przyjść na twoje urodziny, gdyż wcześniej już potwierdziłam przyjście na wesele kuzyna, które jest w tym samym dniu, co twoje urodziny. Mam nadzieję, że spotkamy się kiedyś na kawę, żeby pogadać. Nie będziesz miał mi tego za złe, tych urodzin.]

### **Responding to a refusal**

This scenario has shown the most differences between the two groups of respondents (see Table 6.8 below). Polish respondents show a preference for favourable responses to refusals (mixed emotions come second), whereas, English respondents show a preference for unfavourable responses to refusals (mixed responses come second). The sample of recording data was relatively small and these findings are different to the written data collection. However, the fact that mixed responses have the second highest number of responses seems to be

significant, with some respondents being undecided about the way they should react to them appropriately (see Chapter 2 for more information).

In terms of emotions associated with responding to a refusal English respondents show a preference for negative emotions, whereas the responses of Polish informants were distributed between positive, (3), negative, (3), and mixed emotional responses, (4).

REFUSALS		Responding to a refusal	
		PL respondents (10)	ENG respondents (10)
Types	Favourable	5	1
	Unfavourable	2	6
	Mixed	3	3
	Alternative Response	0	0
Emotions	Positive	3	0
	Negative	3	5
	Neutral	0	1
	Mixed	4	3
	Not Specified	0	1

Table 6. 8. Recordings. Responding to a Refusal: English and Polish Data

There was only one example of responding to a refusal with favourable responses English informants' data: ENG 9: *Let's go to another film* (as opposed to five examples in the Polish group).

There was no evidence of positive associations with responding to a refusal in the English data, whereas there are three examples of positive emotional responses in Polish informants' responses.

## 6.5.2 Radio Interviews

This section presents an overview of the complimenting situations collected in naturally occurring conversation using unscripted and semi-scripted radio interviews (see Table 6.9 below). Due to the nature of refusal as a speech act, there was a limited number of refusals in the radio programmes. Therefore, this stage of the data collection focused only on compliments. Section a) discusses examples of compliments and Section b) responses to compliments.

<b>Radio interviews</b>	<b>Polish</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Number of interviews</b>	16	9
<b>Total length of recordings (mins)</b>	190	190
<b>Source</b>	Radio Zet, Rmf fm, Polskie Radio Jedylnka, Polskie Radio Trojka, Radio Chilli Zet	BBC Radio 1, BBC Radio 2, Capital FM, Celebrity Radio
<b>Interviewees</b>	Celebrities: Signers, Fashion designers, actors; Pilot, human right activist	Celebrities: Comedian, Actors, Singer; Chef, Entrepreneur
<b>Compliments</b>	38	45
<b>Compliments responses</b>	38	45
<b>Refusals</b>	3	3

Table 6. 9. Radio Interviews: Overview

### a) Making a compliment

The majority of the compliments in both groups of informants were made with a direct reference to the compliment object (ENG 80%, PL 57.89%; See Table 6.10 below). There were more compliments with indirect reference to the complimented object in the Polish group (42.1%) in comparison to the English group (20%). Compliments trigger positive emotions in both groups of informants. The second preferred emotional response in the Polish group is neutral (18.42%).

COMPLIMENTS		Making a compliment	
		English Data	Polish Data
Types	Direct Reference to compliment Object	36 (80%)	22 (57.89%)
	Indirect Reference to compliment Object	9 (20%)	16 (42.1%)
	Other (Lack of compliment)	0	0
Emotions	Positive	40 (88.88%)	30 (78.94%)
	Negative	1 (2.22%)	0
	Neutral (or no emotions)	2 (4.44%)	7 (18.42%)
	Mixed	2 (4.44%)	1 (2.63%)

Table 6. 10. Radio Interviews. Making a Compliment: English and Polish Data

### b) Responding to a Compliment

The majority of compliments in both groups were accepted (ENG 75.55%, PL 76.31%; see Table 6.11 below). There was a difference between English and Polish informants in the ways the compliments were accepted. English respondents showed a preference for direct acceptance (60%), whereas, Polish respondents preferred indirect acceptance (44.73%). Direct acceptance in the Polish group was still quite high, with 31.57% of responses. The number of rejected compliments was comparable in both groups: ENG 17.77% and PL 18.42%.

Responding to compliments was associated with positive emotional responses in both groups (ENG: 48.88% and PL: 63.15%). The second preference was for mixed emotional responses in the English group (22.22%) and neutral in Polish (21.05%).

COMPLIMENTS			Responding to a compliment	
			English Data	Polish Data
Types	Accepted	Directly	27 (60%)	12 (31.57%)
		Indirectly	7 (15.55%)	17 (44.73%)
		and Returned	0	0
	<b>Total Accepted</b>		34 (75.55%)	29 (76.31%)
	Rejected	Directly	4 (8.88%)	3 (7.89%)
		Indirectly	4 (8.88%)	4 (10.52%)
		<b>Total Rejected</b>	8 (17.77%)	7 (18.42%)
	<b>Returned Only</b>		0	0
	<b>Ignored</b>		3 (6.66%)	2 (5.26%)
Emotions	<b>Positive</b>		22 (48.88%)	24 (63.15%)
	<b>Negative</b>		4(8.88%)	1 (2.63%)
	<b>Neutral</b>		9 (20%)	8 (21.05%)
	<b>Mixed</b>		10 (22.22%)	5 (13.15%)

Table 6. 11. Radio Interviews. Responding a Compliment: English and Polish Data

One of the most interesting observations in this set of data is that most compliments that were made with direct reference to compliment object were responded to indirectly in the Polish group of respondents. The following examples are given here for illustration:

Polish Interview 8:

*Presenter: No ale po takich recenzjach. Ja już czytałem takie Amerykańskie, że to ‘najlepszy film Holland’, ‘odpowiedź na ‘Listę Schindler’a’’, ‘doskonała rola Więckiewicza’, i co jeszcze... ‘odważny epicki film’ to napisali w Wall Street Journal*

*[But with such reviews... I even read these American that it was ‘the best Holland’s film’, ‘a response to a Schindler’s list’, ‘genius role of Wieckiweicz’,*

*and what else.. ‘Courageous epic film’ this was written in the Wall Street Journal]*

*Director: Ja myślę, że większość krytyków Amerykańskich się zgodziła, że ten film jest naprawdę udany i widzom się podoba też co najważniejsze.*

*[I think that most of the American critics agreed that this film is very good and the viewers like it too and that’s the most important thing.]*

Most of the compliments in the English group that were made with direct reference to the compliment object were responded to directly (see example below).

English Interview 9:

*GB: With your training. You’re a serious trainer. But you were always a good trainer*

*P: Yea, I always train. But I was like a seesaw, I would train and then I would have burger and chips.*

## **6.6 Statistical Analysis**

### **6.6.1 Rationale and Aims**

The statistical analysis was carried out on the main body of the collected data (N= 200 informants). The aim of the statistical analysis was to establish correlations between types of speech act and the emotions that respondents associate with them in order to explore the causal relations between speech acts, emotions and culture. The sample of collected data is of reasonable size, so the statistical analysis to establish patterns of responses seemed worth doing.

The responses from English and Polish informants were compared to determine whether cultural differences exist and, if they do exist, how significant they are.

The variables compared in the SPSS analysis were: nationality, type of compliment/ refusal or response to a compliment/refusal and emotions associated with the production/reception of a given speech act. The analysis carried out on these variables aimed at exploring hypotheses regarding:

- a) cultural differences between responses provided by English and Polish respondents
- b) correlations between the type of speech acts produced or responded to and the emotions that they are associated with

The statistical analysis was based on correlations tests (the statistical significance of the correlation between two variables: a type of speech act or speech act response and emotional response) that were carried out using the SPSS programme (IBM SPSS Statistics 19).

### **6.6.2 Correlations and Statistical Significance**

The main focus of the statistical analysis was on correlation used to describe the strength and the direction of the relationship between the variables (Pallant 2007: 120). This statistic was obtained through Pearson's correlation marked as 'r', which also provides statistical significance of coefficient 'r'. The Pearson's correlation coefficients 'r' can range from -1 to +1 (where the + or – sign refers to the direction of correlation rather than its strength). Other values of 'r' are also possible but  $r=1$  is described as the perfect correlation, whereas  $r=0$  indicates no correlation at all. Cohen (1988: 79-81) suggests the following guidelines for the values of correlations:

Small:  $r=.10$  to  $.29$

Medium:  $r=.30$  to  $.49$

Large:  $r=.50$  to  $1.0$

The indication of the direction of relationship can be positive or negative:

A positive correlation indicates that as one variable increases, so does the other. A negative correlation indicates that as one variable increases, the other decreases. (Pallant 2007:100)

One of the parameters used in the description of a probability distribution is variance. It describes how far a set of numbers is spread out in relation to the mean.

This part of the analysis also explores covariance which measures how much two random variables change together. Covariance can be positive or negative. If the variables tend to show similar behaviour, then the covariance is positive, i.e. when the greater values of one variable correspond with the greater values of the other variable.; and conversely, when the variables tend to show opposite behaviour, the covariance is negative, i.e. when the greater values of one variable, correspond to the smaller values of the other variable.

Statistical significance is defined by a level of probability ( $p$  or *sig.* for significance) (Morgan et al 2007:91-92), where  $p$  is an estimate of the probability that determines whether the result has occurred by statistical accident. Thus, a high value of  $p$  represents a low level of statistical significance and a low value of  $p$  represents a high level of statistical significance. A typical level at which the threshold of  $p$  is set to be significant is 0.05, which indicates that there is only a 5% probability that the result (the relation between the variables) was accidental. Therefore, usually the higher the  $p$  value is, the less reliable the result.

Generally the level  $p < 0.05$  would normally be considered significant and  $p < 0.005$  highly significant. The  $p$ -value of .05 is customarily treated as a border-line acceptable error level and each value lower than .05 is considered statistically significant and reliable. However, this outcome is often described as arbitrary convention that was established by researchers and it often requires taking other variables into consideration. Although, this study included a significant number of respondents (200), correlations of variables have been split between various values in each category, e.g. there were 3 types of compliments correlated with 4 types of emotional responses, or 7 types of responses to compliments correlated



with 4 types of emotion. This produces a variety of interesting correlations and significant observation but at the same time reduces the statistical probability level as the responses are split between a number of values.

Statistically significant correlations were observed only for some scenarios (mainly these that included responding to a speech act). The first example includes the scenario about responding to a compliment on weight loss, which was significant for all (200) participants but not significant when the file is split into PL and ENG informants. Correlation in this example is significant at a probability level of .009 (see Table 1.16, Appendix 7). The statistical significance is low. That is a positive correlation where an increase in one variable causes the increase in the second variable. The second example includes the only scenario on making a compliment that has shown statistical significance (making a compliment on baking skills). Correlation is significant at a probability level of .011 (low significance) for all 200 participants (see Table 1.17, *ibid*). The correlation is also significant at a probability level of .044 for the English group (See Table 1.18, *ibid*). The correlation is positive. This is interesting as the responses are statistically significant when considering all of the respondents but in the national division it turns out that only one group's correlation is statistically significant.

All scenarios with refusals are statistically significant in the examples of responding to a refusal. Responding to a refusal on a barbeque invitation is significant for all participants at a probability level of .000 (see Table 1.19, *ibid*) but insignificant when the data is split. That's a positive correlation. The statistical correlation is low. This is surprising as responses collected from both groups of respondents are statistically significant. The correlation in the scenario on responding to an offer of cinema tickets is significant only for Polish data at a probability level of .025 (see Table 1.20, *ibid*). The correlation is negative, which means that when one variable increases, the other decreases. The correlation in the scenario on responding to a request to give a speech is significant for all respondents at a probability level of .000 (See Table 1.21, *ibid*) and English data

at a probability level of .000 (see Table 1.22, *ibid*) **but not Polish data**. The correlation in both cases is positive. The statistical significance is low. There is no statistical significance at a probability level of .586 in the Polish group of informants. This again is interesting as the correlation is statistically significant for all the responses collected in this scenario and for responses collected from the English respondents but not Polish respondents.

Since significant correlations were established only in scenarios that involved responding to a particular speech act, this finding needs to be discussed further and more research needs to be carried out to find out its significance. The fact that only certain scenarios proved to be significant in terms of the correlations between emotions could be related to the institutionalisation of speech act. Usually, making a compliment or refusal (rather than responding to it) can be seen as conventional (e.g. using conventional phrases, such as: *what a lovely..* or in situations that require it, such as complimenting a new born baby). Although, compliment responses can be conventionalised (e.g. saying *Thank you* to a compliment can be seen as a conventional norm of politeness because other responses may be seen as rude). There are more varieties of responses to refusal that do not necessarily follow convention, as there doesn't seem to be any 'appropriate' response to a refusal that would be universally accepted and approved, as it is in case of compliments. Therefore, emotions associated with these scenarios are more 'straightforward', because there is less suspicion about refusals being made as part of convention (i.e. because a situation requires it) rather than being 'genuine'. More research needs to be carried out to investigate this further.

### **6.6.3 Statistical Analysis of the Qualitative Data**

The SPSS analysis of the results of the survey was very useful in two ways. First, it provided data for pragmatic analysis. Secondly, it corroborated the conclusions of the pragmatic analyses (see Section 6.1-6.5 and Chapter 7). This is despite the fact that the statistical analysis of the qualitative data collected for this study was

very challenging, because many of the statistical tests were difficult to carry out without compromising the quality of findings.

Establishing the statistical significance of the qualitative data is crucial for investigating whether the occurrence of correlations is accidental. However, the probability level of  $p < 0.05$  does not seem to be achievable in the set of data collected for this research. It seems that the more values are assigned to one variable, the greater the dispersion of the possible correlations is. This brings the level of probability higher than 0.05 and simultaneously, the level of significance decreases. Yet, adjusting the values in the variables for types of compliments/refusals or responses to compliments' refusals and possibly reducing them to only a couple of choices (e.g. types of compliment responses values could be accepted or rejected instead of accepted directly, accepted indirectly, accepted and returned etc.) would drastically compromise the quality of findings, as these values contribute to the in-depth analysis that cannot be achieved by using only a limited number of categories of responses.

Qualitative data differs in many ways from quantitative data which is better suited for statistical analysis. Qualitative data, however, provides more insights into the importance of the context in explaining communicative behaviour, which can be better explained with the use of pragmatic analysis.

## **6.7 Summary**

In this chapter the results of the data collection were described and a comparison of the written and spoken data was presented based on the following data sets:

- Written data collection: Main Study DCTs
- Spoken Data Collection: Recordings and Radio Interviews (compliments only)

Written data collection resembles spoken data collection in the scenarios on complimenting behaviour. The differences are very minor.

Both groups of respondents show a preference for making compliments with the direct reference to the compliment object and compliment responses are associated with positive emotional responses (see Tables 1.23 and 1.24, Appendix 8).

The data sets also show similarities in responding to compliments. There is a preference for accepting compliments directly and compliments are associated with positive emotional responses (Table 1.25 and 1.26, *ibid*).

Overall, the written and spoken data on making refusals and responding refusals are comparable. Making refusals in both sets of data shows a tendency for making direct refusals (Table 1.27 and 1.28, *ibid*). Making refusals is associated with negative emotional responses in the Polish data in both, a written and spoken set of responses (Table 1.28, *ibid*). The English set of data shows a greater variety of emotional responses with a high score of positive emotional responses as well as negative responses (Table 1.27, *ibid*). A similar tendency can be observed in the spoken data, where mixed and positive emotional responses have the highest scores.

Responding to a refusal shows some more variety. The English data (Table 1.29, *ibid*) show a preference for unfavourable responses to refusals in the written data set but favourable and mixed responses in the spoken data set. This may be an indication that the respondents were indecisive and could not specify if they feel positive or negative about the refusal. The emotional responses in the spoken data set also slightly differ and show the informants' preference for negative responses and mixed responses being the second preferred response. In a written set of data negative emotional responses were a second preference.

Polish sets of written and spoken data also show some minor differences (Table 1.30, *ibid*). Favourable responses to refusals are preferred in the most of responses, but the pilot study data shows preference for mixed responses. There is a strong preference for associating responses to refusals with negative emotions in both sets of data. Yet, spoken data shows a greater variety of the dispersion of the responses as all of choices have similar number of responses.

Both sets of data on refusals show a tendency for refusals to be quite long and expressive as they consisted of a variety of mitigating strategies that may minimise the risk of offending the hearer and making the case for making a refusal somewhat stronger. A number of mitigating devices used in refusing behaviour (e.g. apologies and alternatives) in written and spoken data is comparable (see Section 6.4.2). The length of the responses based on the characters count in the scenario on making a refusal to a birthday party invitation differs among Polish and English respondents with Polish refusals being longer. Comparing written and spoken data, longer responses were provided in the spoken data, which is in agreement with previous research in the area (see Section 6.4.2a).

Statistical probability was significant only in selected examples and more investigation is necessary to find out the reasons for these differences (see Section 6.6). A more detailed discussion of the results in relation to the theoretical concepts introduced in Chapters 1-4 is presented in the following chapter (Chapter 7).

## Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

### 7.1 Introduction

*I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.*  
(attributed to Maya Angelou, The Guardian, 2014)

We decide what to say and how to say it depending on what we want to communicate and on how we hope to make other people feel. Of course, our decisions are based on our judgements, and these are often, perhaps always, influenced by our own feelings. In light of these self-evidently true observations, it is more than a little surprising that the study of communicative interaction within the broad field of pragmatics has focused more on information and judgement than on emotion, feeling and affect. The research presented in this thesis can be read as a modest attempt to explore the possibility of articulating an approach to communicative interaction which integrates its cognitive-propositional and its affective-emotional sides. A major problem for this endeavour is that the point of contact between the non-propositional, non-cognitive, affective-emotional phenomena and the cognitive-propositional ones is difficult to establish in a principled and theoretically plausible way. Chapter 3 makes a case for the view that once emotions are defined as irruptive motivations, i.e. as dispositional psychological states not resulting from means to ends reasoning (as Griffiths (1996) argues), it is possible to include in a principled way in the category of emotions both the simple, basic, universal emotions and the complex, cognitive emotions which are sensitive to external ecological influences and display considerable cultural variation, reflected in the ways they are conceptualised across cultures. The Relevance-theoretic perspective on communication, whose main tenets are outlined in Chapter 4, provides a straightforward answer to the question of why emotions play an important causal

role in the production and the interpretation of communicative acts. In a nutshell, human cognition is geared towards improving the knowledge base of individuals (and groups of individuals) by mentally representing and processing information. As information processors, we operate within limited time and we have limited resources of mental energy. Since the function of human cognition is to bring about improvements in our knowledge base, its efficiency is a positive function of novel information worth having, and because the mental representation and processing of inputs to the cognitive system is 'costly', its efficiency is a negative function of the mental processing effort expended in figuring out worthwhile information based on the inputs and existing knowledge. Communication, which is a very important means of improving the world knowledge of individuals and groups of individuals, presents specific additional challenges for the cognitive system. The success of communicative interaction depends on the participants' ability to co-operate in making assumptions on each other's informative intentions by assessing each other's cognitive resources, competencies, goals, and preferences. As Frank (1988) argues, an important social function of emotions is to commit us to acting in certain ways rather than others (see Chapter 3). This function of emotions is very important for communicative interaction. One of the key features of human communication is that it involves the production and the interpretation of evidence of intentions in context (i.e. a set of assumptions drawn from various sources, including perception, earlier communicative interaction and general world knowledge). It stands to reason that the processing of communicative acts for informativeness (technically, relevance) in context, will be more efficient if we can make reliable judgements about the interlocutors' affective-emotional disposition towards each other and towards the topic of the communicative interaction. Therefore, it is not surprising that particular types of speech act whose function is to modify the emotional-affective relationship between the participants have emerged across cultures, for the purpose of repairing, maintaining or improving their affective-emotional relationship (technically, rapport) and in this way enabling more effective cooperation between them in ongoing or future social interaction. From this perspective, compliments and refusals can be described as types of speech act with complementary

functions. The primary purpose of (sincere) compliments is to maintain and enhance positive rapport, while that of polite refusals is to minimise the negative emotions likely to result from the speech act of refusing.

The most general research question investigated in the present study is whether there are cultural differences between these speech acts in relatively proximate cultures, focusing on those of Poland and England. The research data supports the initial hypothesis that such differences do indeed exist. The differences in the production and the interpretation of these speech acts in these two cultures are easily overlooked, because the observable ones can be seen identified only when a relatively large number of instances are compared, while emotional responses to these speech acts are not directly observable and are difficult to identify for this reason. Another research question addressed in this project is whether there are causal connections between the ways particular speech acts of compliment and refusal are performed and the emotions associated with those speech acts.

The discussion of selected data collected as part of the study presented in this chapter lends support to these assumptions and shows that the theoretical framework outlined above (and developed in Chapters 3 and 4) has some interesting implications for the classification of compliments and refusals.

First, a comparison of English and Polish data (similarities and differences based on previously established categories of responses, see Chapter 2 and 6) is given and the most interesting observations, troublesome examples and solutions to classification problems are discussed. The presentation is structured as follows:

- 1) English and Polish data: similarities
  - a) Compliments
  - b) Refusals
- 2) English and Polish data: differences
  - a) Compliments
  - b) Refusals



- 3) Troublesome examples
- 4) Discussion of classification issues

The data description and analysis show that there are differences between two closely related cultures (Section 7.2., 7.3 and 7.4). The differences between the cultures of England and Poland are discussed in terms of cultural proximity (Chapter 1). Sections 7.4 and 7.5 include a discussion of the classification issues of compliments and refusals and responses to them from the perspective of Relevance Theory, face needs and politeness issues introduced in Chapter 4 in an attempt to cast some light on the relation between speech acts and the emotions associated with them. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the limitations of the present study (Section 7.6) and some directions for future research which the study suggests might be worth pursuing (Section 7.7).

## **7.2 English and Polish data: Similarities**

Similarities in patterns of responses in the English and the Polish data were observed in the scenarios on complimenting behaviour. Compliments are associated with positive emotional responses, such as *Good*, *Great*, *Happy* and *Appreciated* in both groups of respondents. This is consistent with the (uncontroversial) assumption that compliments have positive emotional valence. The main interest of this finding is that it supports the method used for carrying out this study. As pointed out in Chapter 3, the existing literature on emotions shows that people are reasonably aware of them, so it is to be expected that informants should be able to report reasonably accurately on the emotions they experienced in particular situations.

The types of compliments used in the DCT scenarios on complimenting behaviour show a tendency for direct reference to the compliment object, as can be observed in the scenario where respondents had to make a compliment on a haircut:

ENG 90: *That's a fine haircut.*

PL 10: *This haircut really suits you.* [*Bardzo ładnie ci w tej fryzurze.*]

This observation is somewhat surprising as English culture is known for its indirectness. Yet, the number of compliments with indirect reference to the compliment object is still much higher among English (Figure 7.1) respondents than among Polish respondents (Figure 7.2):

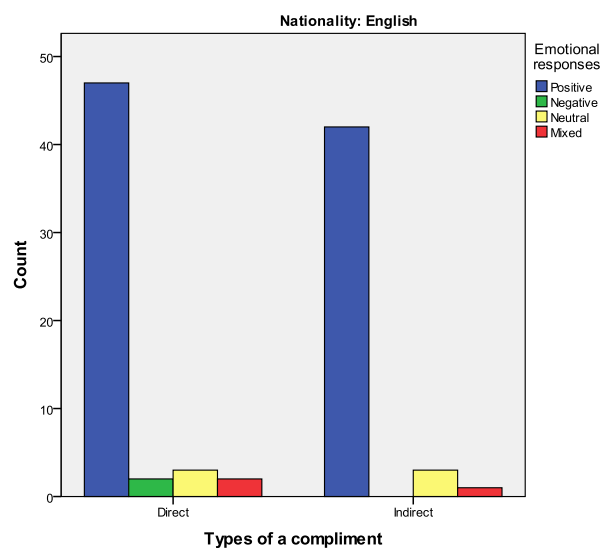


Figure 7. 1. English Data: Making a Compliment on a Haircut

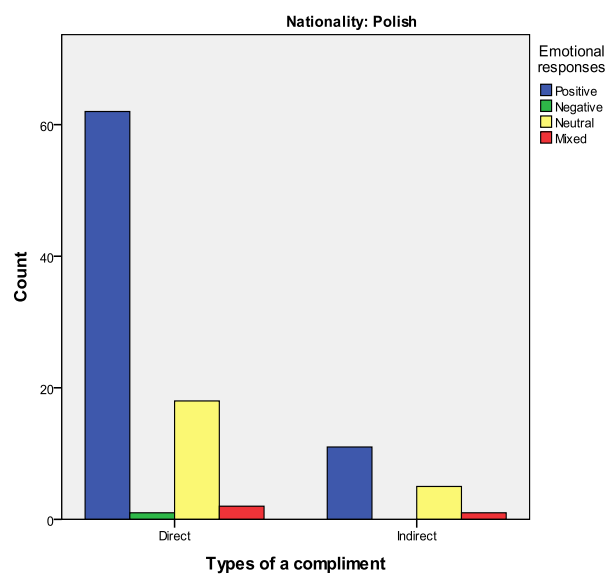


Figure 7. 2. Polish Data: Making a Compliment on a Haircut

This finding can be explained in RT terms. According to the Communicative Principle of Relevance (and the production strategy followed by the speaker), introduced in Chapter 4, the communicative act should be optimally relevant, i.e. it should aim convey all and only the information that the speaker intends to convey without putting the hearer to the expenditure of unjustifiable processing effort. In a situation where the speaker's main aim is to pay a compliment to the hearer, an utterance which makes direct reference to the compliment object will require less processing effort than an utterance which requires the hearer first to figure out what the compliment is on. This raises the question: why was the object compliment not always referred to explicitly by all informants? There are two possible explanations which are not mutually exclusive. First, in some situations, where it is evident (technically, mutually manifest) to both speaker and hearer what the compliment object is, explicit reference to the compliment object would be superfluous, putting the hearer to greater expenditure of mental processing effort, without conveying additional information that the speaker considers worth communicating. Second, the observed difference between Polish informants and English informants (the latter used indirect reference to the compliment object more than the former, see Figure 7.1 and 7.2 above) can be explained in terms of communication styles which are typical of particular socio-cultural groups. As explained in Chapter 2, compliments are a standardized (i.e. institutionalised) type of speech act. This means that there are likely to be regularities in how they are made by the members of a given socio-cultural group. So, this finding supports the generalization that English culture tends to be more indirect than Polish culture, but it also supports the view that a person's linguistic behaviour in social interaction is guided by general pragmatic principles.

The observation about English culture being more indirect than Polish culture (see Section 6.3.1a) can also be discussed in relation to high- and low-context and collectivism-individualism dimensions introduced in Chapter 1. Poland is more collectivist according to Hofstede (2001) and it is more low context in terms of prevalent communicative style, which means that a message is typically conveyed more explicitly. Thus, more words are often used to convey a message (see Section 6.4.2a for examples and the discussion of the length of Polish refusals).

UK is more individualist and high-context, therefore, more contextual information is typically required to interpret a communicative act. The messages are communicated less explicitly, using perhaps fewer words but the choice of words matters. Referring to individualism, which involves a preference for small immediate circles of close-knit relationships, communicating a message implicitly to an in-group hearer seems to be more effective and may not work as efficiently in larger out-groups (as it may do case in more collectivist cultures).

This observation could also be described in terms of the epidemiology of representations: people have different expectations based on their assumptions about their mutual cognitive environments. Therefore, levels of directness/indirectness in communication vary depending on the relationship between the interlocutors and even within a culture that is generally considered indirect, members may still prefer to communicate their messages directly (see Section 6.3.1a for data on compliments and 6.4.2a for data on refusals).

Responses to scenarios on complimenting behaviour are comparable in both groups. The main differences can be observed in the scenario with responding to a compliment on a coat, which shows a greater variety of responses in the English group of informants (see Figure 7.3 and 7.4 below):

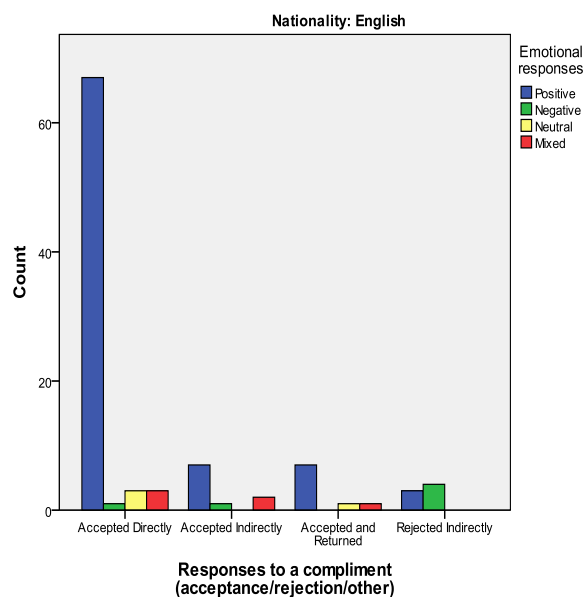


Figure 7. 3. English Data: Responding to a Compliment on a Coat

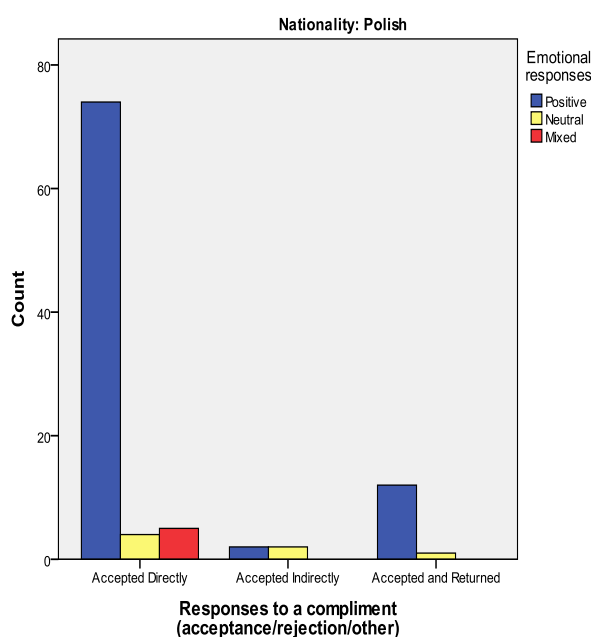


Figure 7. 4. Polish Data: Responding to a Compliment on a Coat

Despite the difference in the spread of responses in the two groups of respondents, it is clear that both groups responded favourably to the direct acceptance of the compliment. This suggests that what is valued is the appreciation of the compliment, rather than its acceptance or rejection. Clearly, by accepting a compliment on one's personal possessions, such as a new coat, the hearer shows appreciation unambiguously, and this is met with the complimenter's approval. Less direct acceptance of the compliment may convey appreciation less strongly, or it may convey a lack of appreciation, which accounts for mixed responses on those types of compliment.

It stands to reason that what is relevant to the complimenter is that the compliment is appreciated, rather than whether it is appreciated by being accepted directly or in some other way. So, this finding suggests that a classification of compliments based on insights from Relevance-theoretic pragmatics can lead to a more psychologically plausible classification of compliments and compliment responses, one which focuses on appreciation, rather than (superficial) acceptance or rejection, a point overlooked in previous research (see Section 2.5).

### 7.3 English and Polish Data: Differences

Similarities between English and Polish data are not unexpected. However, the differences between the two can be interesting from the point of view of cultural comparison and in relation to the first research question about the differences between cultures that are considered as proximate (see Section 1.3).

Scenarios on refusals show the most diverse responses between English and Polish responses. Compliments show the same type of preferred response, but a different distribution of second preferred type of response and general dispersion of various types responses (as opposed to certain types of responses being more popular than others). **Below (see points a) to f)) is a list of scenarios that show the most varied of responses:**

- a) Making a compliment on passing the driving test at the first attempt

The responses of English respondents showed the least variety in the types of emotions that they associated with this scenario (see Figure 7.5). The majority of responses were positive and respondents reported being happy with their sister's/brother's success. The responses of Polish respondents have been more diverse, with a considerable number of informants stating that they were jealous of their sibling passing the driving test at the first attempt, as they themselves had not been so successful (see Figure 7.6).

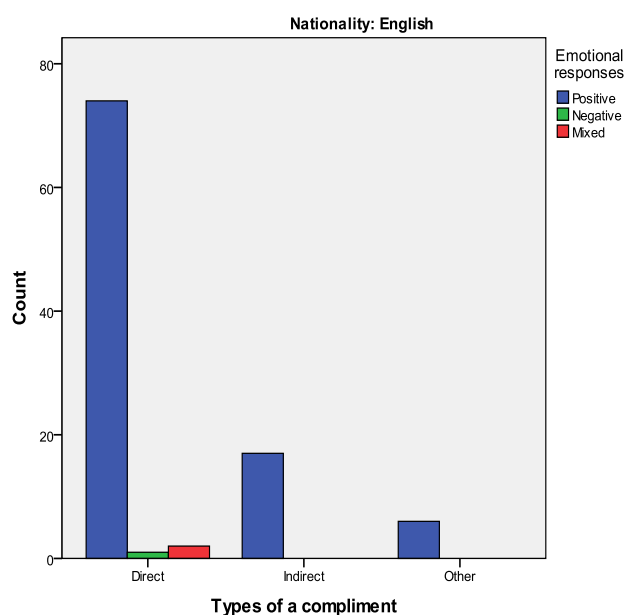


Figure 7. 5. English Data: Making a Compliment on passing a driving test at the first attempt

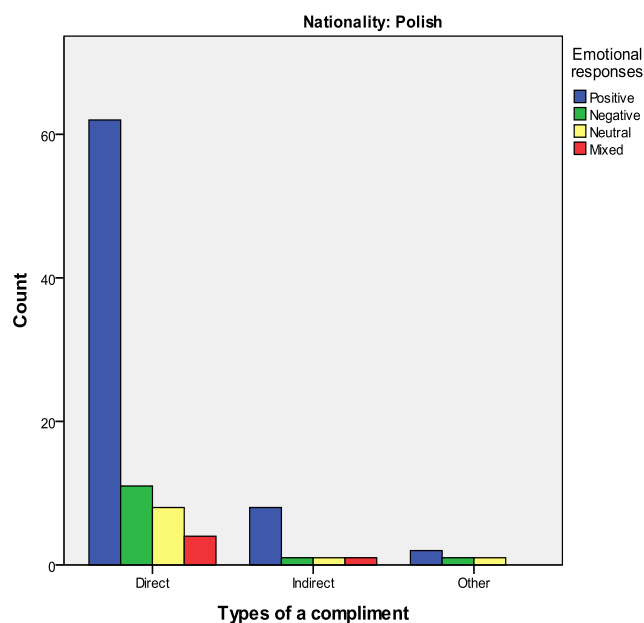


Figure 7. 6. Polish Data: Making a Compliment on passing a driving test at the first attempt

This finding is difficult to interpret without further research. First, it is possible that jealousy is more of a taboo for English respondents than it is for Polish respondents. Second, it is also possible that in Poland passing the driving test at the first attempt is considered very exceptional, so more likely to cause a jealous

emotional response. These possibilities are not mutually exclusive, so both may play a role here. The differences in responses to this scenario (as well as a scenario complimenting a new mobile phone discussed in Section 6.4.1a) can be attributed to jealousy associated with compliments on possessions or achievements (Jaworski, 1995). Moreover, these types of compliments can be seen by the hearer as conventional, i.e. the compliment is paid because the situation requires it, e.g. acknowledging a new purchase, but not necessarily sincere (often both the speaker and the hearer know the intention behind the compliment, but still engage in this ‘polite ritual’).

b) Responding to a compliment on a new coat

The data from English (Figure 7.7) respondents shows a greater variety of responses to compliments than Polish respondents’ data which shows only three types of compliment acceptance (Figure 7.8).

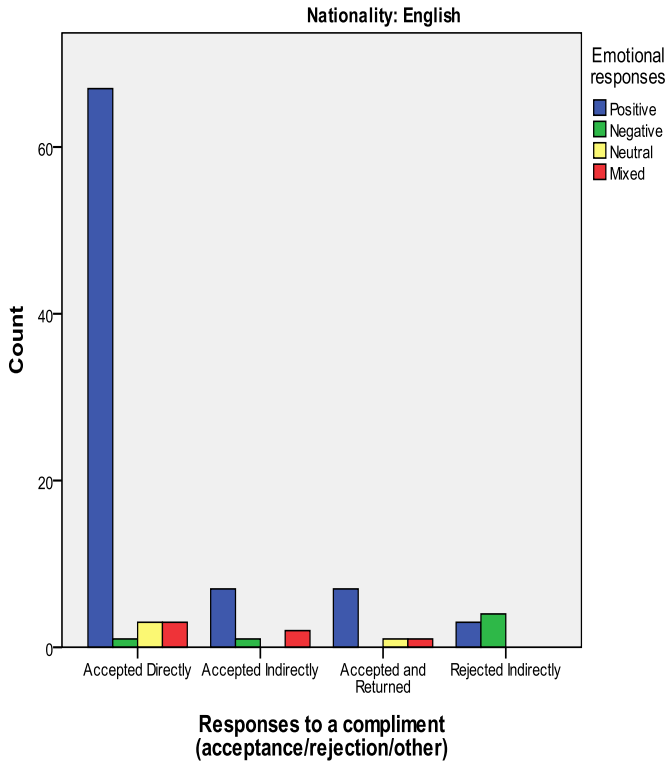


Figure 7. 7. English Data: Responding to a compliment on a new coat



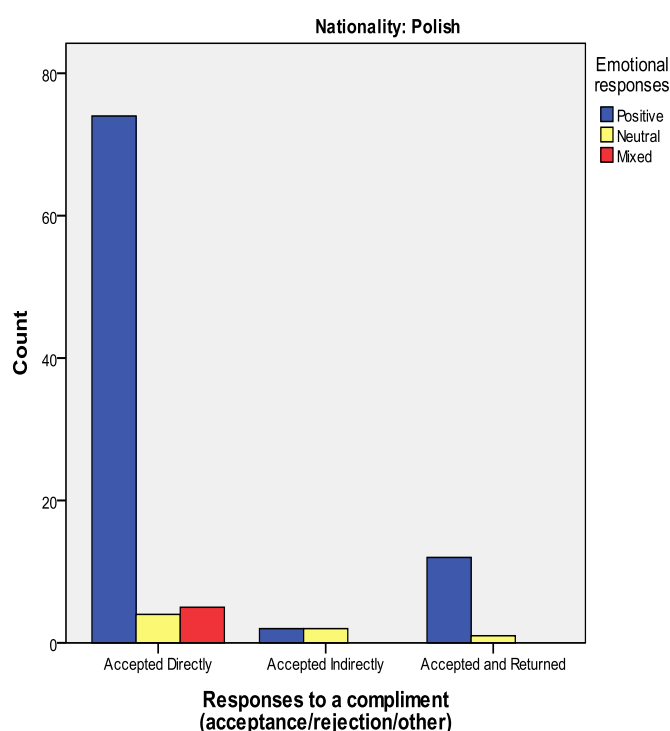


Figure 7. 8. Polish Data: Responding to a compliment on a new coat

Responses to compliments have also shown some differences in English and Polish data when it comes to compliment rejection. As shown in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.4.1b), although the general tendency is for compliments to be accepted, there were some cases of compliment responses which would be described as compliment rejections according to the established classification (see Sections 2.5.3 and 6.2). Indirect rejection was more common in the English group (5.75%) and direct rejection (2.75%; see Table 6.2. in Chapter 6 page 152) in the Polish group. **Direct rejection of compliments can be related to the suspicion that Polish people associate with compliments that could be ‘habitual’ rather than ‘sincere’ (Jaworski 1995, Lewandowska- Tomaszczyk 1989, see also Section 2.5.4b). Treating compliments as products of routinised communicative behaviour may result in their dismissal, i.e. direct rejection. When the complimentee becomes suspicious about the intention of the complimenter, he/she may respond to the compliment by saying, e.g. PL 37: *They are not this good at all!* (a response to a compliment on baking skills). This response can also be interpreted as self-praise**

avoidance on the part of the complimentee. This self-deprecating strategy may, however, affect the complimenter who may feel that the compliment is not appreciated, but that his/her judgement is questioned and this poses a threat to his/her positive face. The complimentee's preference for modesty in order to save his or her own face seems to be a universal characteristic of compliments (see also Section 2.5.2).

c) Making a refusal to a birthday party invitation

In this situation refusals are associated mainly with negative emotions in the Polish group of respondents (Figure 7.9). The responses are more diverse in the English group (Figure 7.10). The scenario on making a refusal to look after a pet dog shows a similar pattern of responses (see Appendix 9).

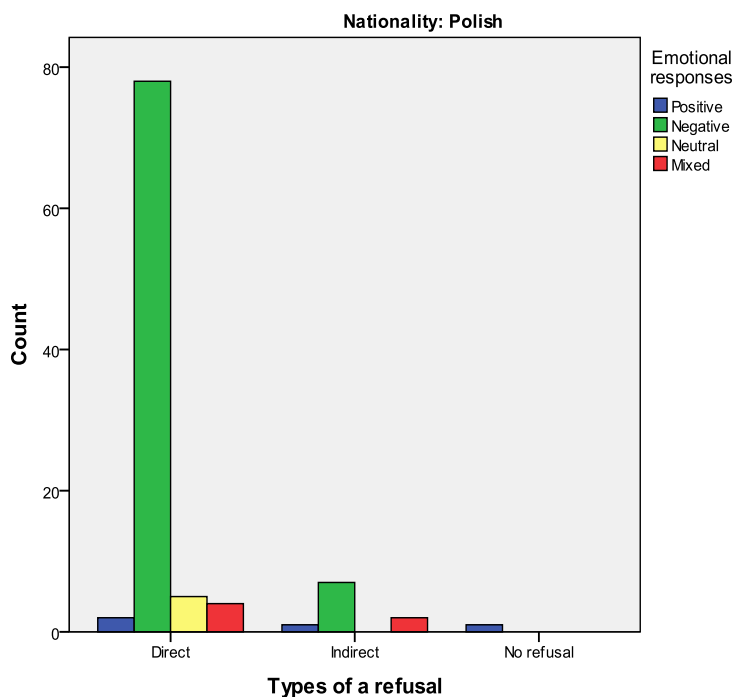


Figure 7. 9. English Data: Making a refusal to a birthday party invitation

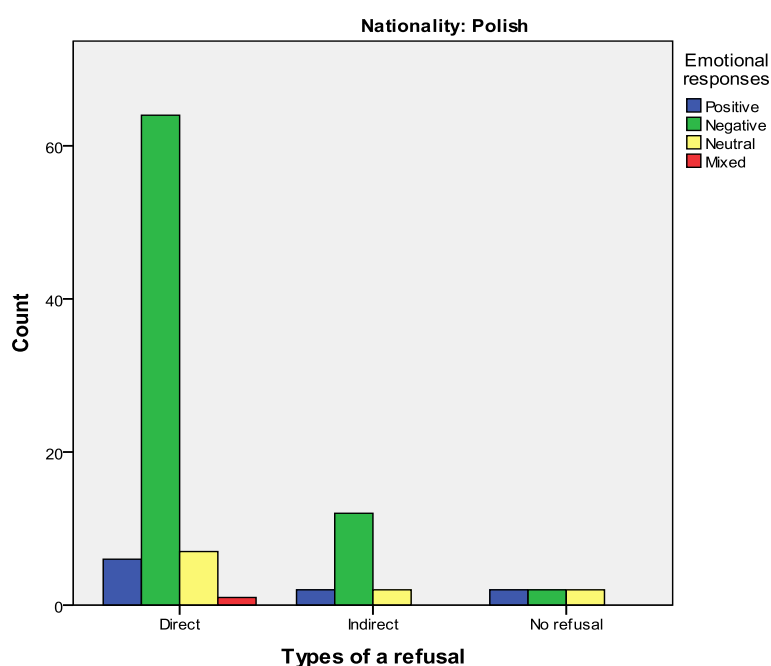


Figure 7. 10. Polish Data: Making a refusal to a birthday party invitation

As discussed in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.4.1a), there are some differences in responses to specific scenarios when making a refusal. This observation may relate to the type of situation described in the scenario. It seems that looking after a pet is more of an imposition on a person than anything else mentioned in the other scenarios, thus, the hearers' responses are more categorical and to the point. Refusing to have something done to oneself (e.g. to have a tattoo; see Table 1.12, Appendix 6.3.4) seems easier for the hearer to communicate in a more strategic and non-offensive way than offering to commit time to look after a pet. In the Polish group of respondents there were two examples of no refusal being made to this scenario (looking after a pet dog). Some Polish informants would rather agree to a request (i.e. save the speaker's face) than cause upset. There were two examples when no refusal was made (birthday party invitation) in the English group of informants. This scenario also has the highest number of mixed emotional responses. The second highest score for mixed emotions is recorded in the scenario about the suggestion to have a haircut. It seems that for English informants it is harder to make a refusal to a birthday party invitation, as

evidenced by the high number of negative and mixed emotions associated with this scenario (see Table 1.12, Appendix 6.3.4). This scenario also had the highest number of negative emotions reported by Polish informants (See Table, 1.13, *ibid*).

d) Refusals in response to barbecue invitation

English respondents gave a high number of positive emotional responses to refusals in this scenario (Figure 7.11). In the Polish group the responses were more dispersed and mainly negative (Figure 7.12).

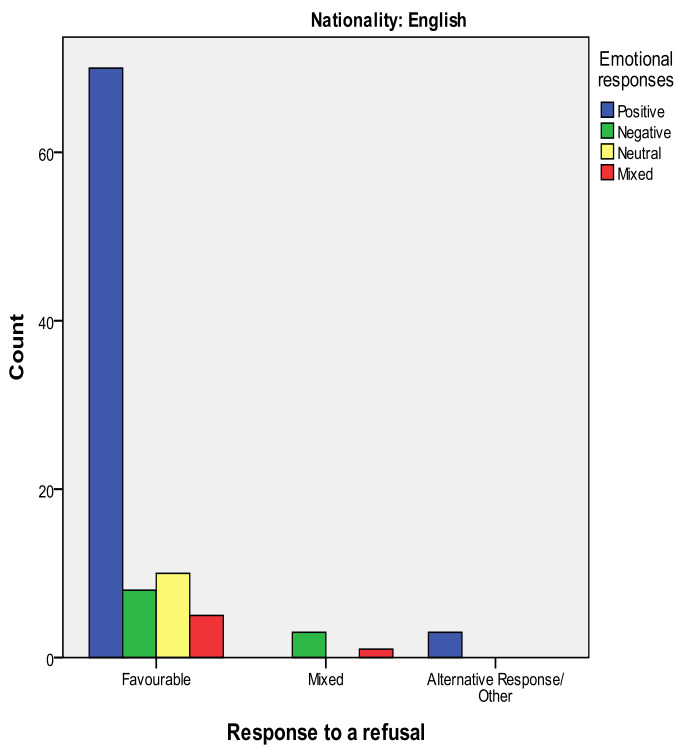


Figure 7. 11. English Data: Responding to a refusal to a barbecue invitation

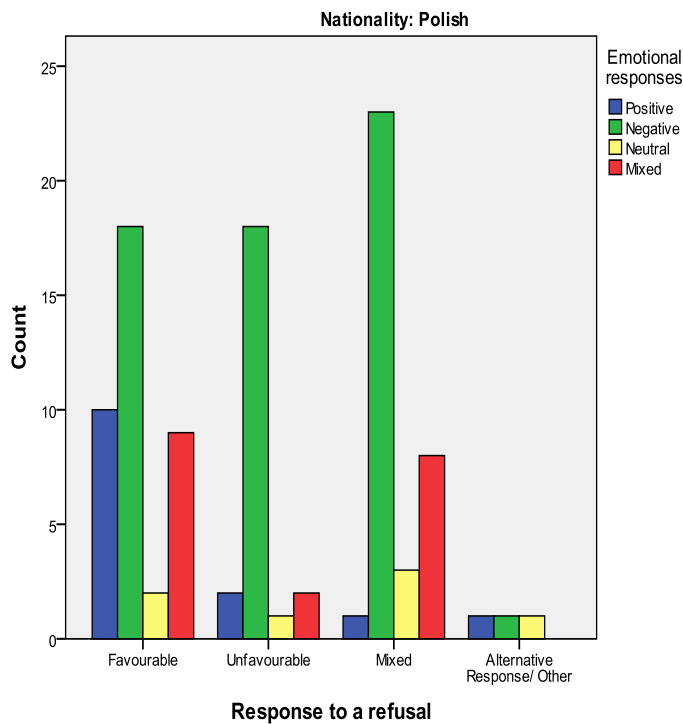


Figure 7. 12. Polish Data: Responding to a refusal to a barbecue invitation

This finding seems strongly to support the view that in certain respects (i.e. types of situation) the Polish culture is characterised by a strong expectation of mutual support between people in a particular relationship with regard to personal favours. This is all the more interesting because the difference shown is greater than one would be led to expect based on Hofstede's assessment of the Polish and English cultures on the collectivism-individualism scale (see Chapter 1). What this finding suggests is that generalisations about cultures based on people's behaviour in particular (types of) situations are more valuable than generalizations about a given socio-cultural group as a whole.

Another interesting observation (which is also supported by responses to refusals in some other situations) is that English respondents seem to be more congruent than Polish respondents. The latter were more inclined to give a favourable response to the refusal, even when their emotional responses were negative. This is interesting from the point of view of assumptions about the superficiality, even

insincerity, of linguistically polite behaviour of the English, which are widely held by people from other cultures.

e) Refusals to an offer of cinema tickets

There were more negative responses in the Polish data (Figure 7.14) than in the English data (Figure 7.13) for this scenario. The response to this situation also shows that English participants seem to be more congruent than Polish participants.

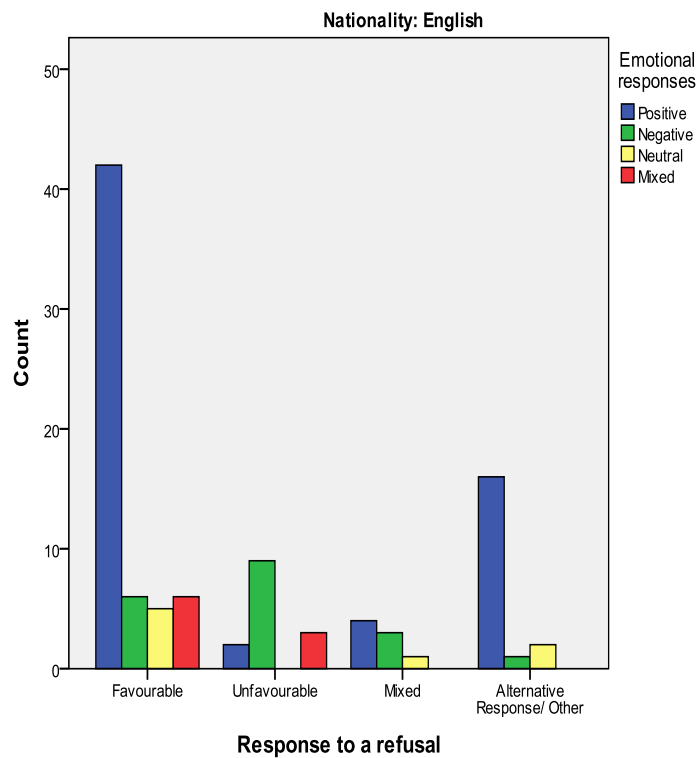


Figure 7. 13. English Data: Responding to a refusal to an offer of cinema tickets

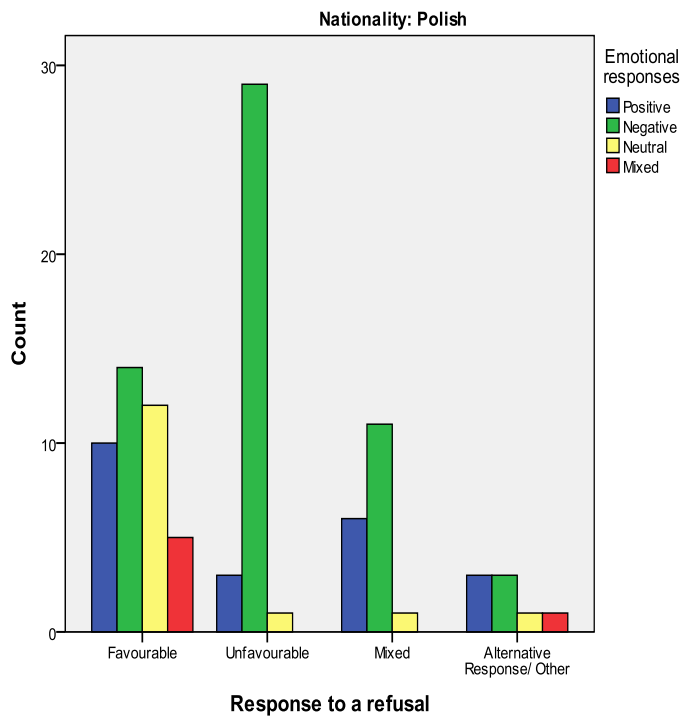


Figure 7. 14. Polish Data: Responding to a refusal to an offer of cinema tickets

f) Refusals to giving an offer of a lift:

There most striking difference between the two groups is that Polish participants (Figure 7.16) were more likely than English participants (Figure 7.15) to give a favourable or neutral response to the refusal even when their emotional responses were negative.

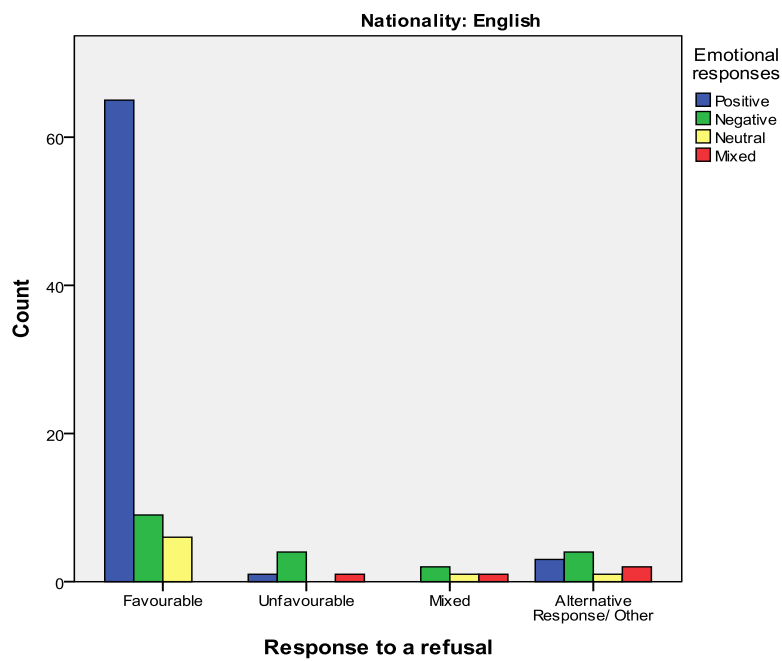


Figure 7. 15. English Data: Responding to a refusal on an offer of a lift

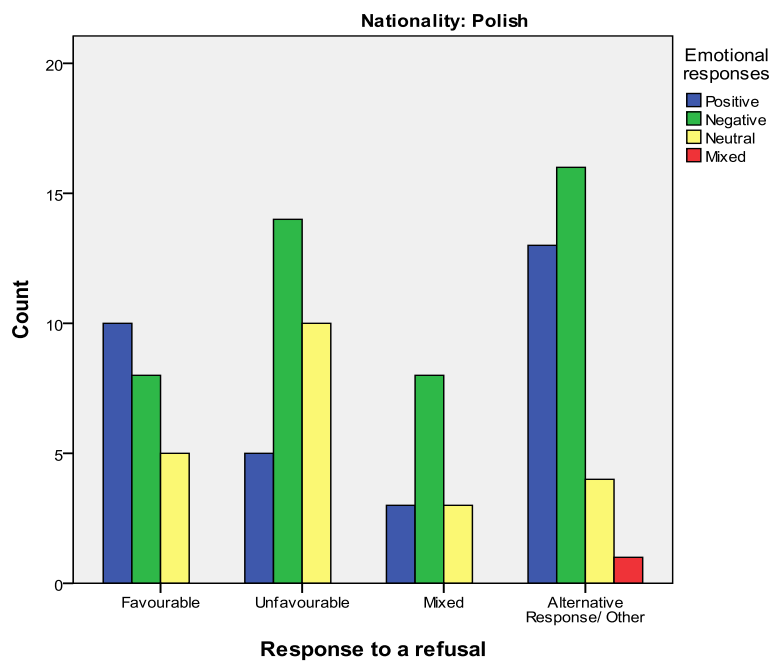


Figure 7. 16. Polish Data: Responding to a refusal on an offer of a lift

How are these patterns of responses to refusals to be explained? Clearly, the main value of the data collected for the present study is that the patterns of responses



have been identified. Further research targeting those patterns in a manner which is likely to provide an answer to this question is called for. One way to obtain further valuable data might be to find out whether the same patterns would emerge in situations which differ in respect of specific variables, such as the status differential and the kind of relationship between the participants in the situation, the setting (e.g. place and time) and the scene (the psychological construal of the situation by the participants). Another factor that might be investigated concerns the social pressures on participants in the communication to avoid giving unfavourable responses regardless of their emotional disposition. The answer provided in terms of sweeping generalizations underlying the constructs of 'collectivism' and 'individualism', even if applicable, amounts to giving labels for problems to be explained, rather than providing explanatory insights. This type of 'explanation' might be to state that Poland is a comparatively collectivist culture and that collectivist cultures put greater emphasis on harmony and agreement with others than individualist cultures do. As England is a more individualist culture, its members are under less pressure to avoid giving responses which are not desirable from the hearers' point of view. A truly explanatory account would need to identify the values, assumptions, attitudes and other ecological factors which put particular pressures on people to communicate the way they do (see Chapter 2).

One of the main differences in English and Polish refusals data concerns the relation between refusals and positive emotions. The fact that refusals can be associated with positive emotions is rather surprising, considering that this speech act is face-threatening and puts relationships at risk (Brown and Levinson 1978; See Section 2.7). However, there are situations in which refusals are seen as unavoidable. For this reason, refusers resort to one or more out of many available mitigating strategies (such as apologies and alternatives) which allow the interlocutors to deal with the force of the refusal and minimise its impact on the relationship (Brown and Levinson, 1978). The evidence suggests that there are differences in how these mitigating devices are perceived by respondents. They seem to minimise the offence caused by the refusal among English respondents, while Polish respondents' reactions are negative.

## 7.4 Troublesome examples

A number of responses to the DCTs presented difficulties for classification. They are briefly considered here in the light of the theoretical concepts of Speech Act Theory (Chapter 2) and Relevance Theory (Chapter 4).

### 7.4.1 Troublesome Compliments

In some instances it was not possible to establish whether a given compliment response communicated (indirect) acceptance or (indirect) rejection. Consider the following examples from the data (Table 7.1):

<b>Polish data:</b>	<b>English data:</b>
<b>1. Responses to compliment on weight loss</b>  PL 70: It's because you're eating my food out at night and I'm walking hungry. PL 34: Caroline, I look just like I normally do 😊	<b>4. Responses to compliment on weight loss</b> ENG 4: aw, it's really nothing, I'm trying to eat healthy that's all ENG 15: I'm wearing my slimming clothes ENG 16: I went back to jogging ENG 86: I think my clothes have stretched ENG 94: hmmm..that wasn't my intention ENG 95: I wish I could grow some muscles though
<b>2. Responses to compliment on a grade</b>  PL 22: I had more luck than reason. PL 68: Maybe. PL 73: You study, you get it. PL 77: I was lucky. PL 94: It's only 'A'. Anyone can get it. There is someone better for sure.	<b>5. Responses to compliment on a grade</b>  ENG 5: oh, it's really nothing ENG 10: I can't believe it! ENG 12: I'm glad it's over now, never again! ENG 26: no more late nights for me ENG 30: oh please, don't embarrass me ENG 46: no more sleepless nights for me ENG 59: oh that was nothing really, I haven't studied at all ENG 70: please, don't mention it ENG 77: oh please, it was nothing ENG 92: oh this is embarrassing ENG 94: oh, I didn't really spend much time working on it ENG 95: I feel like a nerd now ENG 96: not sure that's my grade ENG 97: oh it's nothing major really, not sure how that happened
<b>3. Responses to compliment on cupcakes</b>	<b>6. Responses to compliment on cupcakes</b>

<p>PL 21: That's a secret recipe and only I know it.</p> <p>PL 22: I won't reveal my secret to anyone.</p> <p>PL 73: Pride is a sin!</p>	<p>ENG 3: sure thing</p> <p>ENG 11: I will definitely teach you how to make these, it's quite easy if even I can make them</p> <p>ENG 15: I will make one more batch tomorrow</p> <p>ENG 44: I will give you my recipe</p> <p>ENG 58: it's really easy</p> <p>ENG 81: I think it was just beginner's luck, but I can give you the recipe.</p> <p>ENG 87: It was a one off</p> <p>ENG 92: my sister helped me</p> <p>ENG 93: I don't really bake, it was a one off</p> <p>ENG 95: my mum was visiting</p> <p>ENG 98: that's how it's done people</p>
	<p><b>7. Responses to compliment on a coat</b></p> <p>ENG 61: oh it's kind of old</p> <p>ENG 77: it's old Mary</p> <p>ENG 82: oh please</p> <p>ENG 86: I bought it some time ago</p> <p>ENG 91: it's just something I found lying around.</p> <p>ENG 94: hmm.. I guess</p> <p>ENG 95: Topman baby ;)</p> <p>ENG 96: it's old really</p>

Table 7. 1. Responding to compliments

In terms of RT, all examples in the Polish data (1) to (3) have something in common: it is not clear what the speaker's attitude toward the proposition expressed is. Within the framework of RT every utterance represents a thought of the speaker, but the speaker also communicates her/his attitude towards that thought: is the thought entertained as a true belief, or as a mere possibility (as is the case with, say, the statement of a scientific hypothesis) or as a thought from which the speaker distances herself/himself with an attitude of disapproval/ridicule or scorn (as is in irony). In some of the examples above, the speaker seems to be using language less than seriously. This seems to be indicated by the smiley at the end of *Caroline, I look just like I normally do ☺*. It seems plausible to assume that the smiley is intended to provide the complimenter with a clue that the complimentee does not hold the thought that she looks the way she usually does as a true belief, but distances herself from this thought, and indirectly communicates both her appreciation of the compliment, possibly also mild

reproof, as the compliment may be taken to imply something negative about her appearance before she lost weight. Clearly, the intended interpretation depends to a large extent on the presumed shared knowledge (technically, mutual cognitive environment) of the participants, about which the DCT can provide little information. Since associating negative emotions with compliments cannot be assigned to neither the English, nor the Polish culture, because they are situation specific possibly showing cultural variation in relation to situations of language use. This observation is theoretically and methodologically significant. This research supports the view that the concept of situation or situation schema - to be more precise - needs to have a central place in the study of cultural variation.

The responses to compliments on a grade, (2), are difficult to analyse, not because it is unclear whether the compliment has been accepted, but because it is unclear what the complimentee is trying to imply about her/his attitude towards the complimenter: is the compliment appreciated or not appreciated, or is it appreciated only to some limited extent or with some reservations. So, in each of the responses in (2) the complimentee distances herself/himself from the thought expressed by her/his response, but it is not clear what her/his attitude towards this thought is. For this reason, it is not clear whether and to what extent he/she intends to imply that she/he appreciates the compliment.

The responses in (5) are difficult to interpret for similar reasons as Polish compliments. It seems worth investigating whether the examples reflect English respondents' use of a modesty strategy here. If this is indeed the case, then we should assume that the compliment is essentially accepted and appreciated, but the complimentee's main concern is to cancel some implicatures about their lack of modesty in order to avoid losing positive face (see Section 4.7). However, some of the 'troublesome' compliment responses in (4) call for a different interpretation. The utterances: *hmmm...that wasn't my intention* and *oh, actually I was hoping to gain some muscles*, may, depending on the context, implicate that the compliment is relevant in the context immediately available to the complimentee as a cause for concern (e.g. about the complimentee's health) and a sign of the complimentee's failure to achieve a personal goal, respectively. The

word ‘though’ in *I wish I could grow some muscles though* indicates that the complimentee does accept the compliment but that a different outcome of her/his efforts to improve her/his physical appearance is more desirable to her/him. In virtue of this, the utterance could be taken to implicate something about the complimentee’s guarded appreciation of the compliment and/or modesty about a personal achievement (by describing the success as only partial).

From the perspective of Relevance-theoretic pragmatics the most interesting of the examples in (3) and (6), responding to a compliment on cupcakes, is: *Pride is a sin!*. The comprehension of this response involves a complex inference process. The speaker may well be seriously putting forward her/his view about ‘pride’, which is very widely held, but it is not clear against which contextual assumptions the utterance should be processed for relevance. One possibility is that the complimentee intends to imply (perhaps somewhat jokingly) that she/he cannot accept the compliment because doing so would mean that she/he is proud in a negative sense of this word. If the implicature is conveyed with a joking attitude, the utterance is rather likely to also be intended to imply that the complimentee actually does appreciate the compliment to the extent that it is decent and socially appropriate to do so. Again, the interpretation crucially depends on the presumed shared knowledge of the complimenter and the complimentee. The interpretation of these relatively standard communication situations depends on the context of situation. They provide scope for originality and support some assumptions about communication being creative. This is something that the tradition of approaches to communication strongly influenced by the code model neither predicts nor can account for in a principled way.

The responses in (3) and (6), seem to have been interpreted as requests either for the complimentee to volunteer to make more cupcakes or for the recipe for making them. It seems worth exploring through further research whether this interpretation is due to assumptions about cupcakes not being particularly difficult to make or particularly delicious, however well they may have been made. In the context of this assumption, a compliment on a cupcake seems relevant only provided the speaker intends to communicate more than the implicature that

would be typically conveyed by a compliment. In light of encyclopaedic assumptions about people being interested in cooking and about cupcakes as relatively easy to bake, the complimentee will be justified in assuming that in paying the compliment, the complimenter intends to implicate that she/he would like to have the recipe for making cupcakes. However, two of the responses in (6): *my sister helped me* and *my mum was visiting* implicate that the complimentee cannot take the credit for baking the cupcakes. In the absence of some situation specific contextual assumptions one response (*sure thing*) could not be interpreted even tentatively.

The compliments in (7) in the English data also seem to involve the modesty strategy, with some interesting exceptions, such as: *oh please*, which seems to indicate rejection and disapproval of the compliment (but the intended interpretation crucially depends on the tone of voice and other paralinguistic features which accompany the linguistic part of the communicative act), and *Topman baby ;)*, where the complimentee accepts the compliment in a manifestly exaggerated manner, thus providing evidence of the intention to imply that, while accepting and appreciating the compliment, he is not serious and does not actually lack modesty.

The examples above also relate to the discussion in Section 7.3b (with an exception of example provided by ENG 95) regarding the distinction between accepted and rejected compliments and face needs. The responses seem to be used as self-praise avoiding mechanisms because the compliments are not evidently acknowledged, although it does not mean that they have not been appreciated. Yet, the impact of a compliment is somewhat minimised/ diminished by the hearer and instead, the speaker's face is threatened. An expected and socially appropriate response in such case would be to say: *Thank you*. Minimising the force of a compliment by the hearer may indicate to the speaker that their compliment was not appreciated and the judgement that they made about a coat is questioned. This can threaten the speaker's positive face. A similar analysis can be given for examples presented in (5) (Table 7.1) e.g. ENG 5, ENG 30, ENG 59, ENG 70, ENG 77.

The modesty strategy seems to be involved in explaining all the compliments in (5). Informal interviews with a number of English informants (who were not asked to complete the DCTs) revealed that conveying a high opinion of one's intellectual abilities and achievements or competence in general, is considered socially inappropriate. This may easily explain why a number of respondents in this group used the modesty strategy in a way which may easily be taken to convey their rejection of the compliment.

### **Making a compliment**

The 'troublesome' data relating to making a compliment support **an observation about issues with classification of compliments with** at least some of the 'troublesome' compliment responses (see Table 7.2 with examples).

<b>Polish data:</b>	<b>English data:</b>
<b>1. Making a compliment on a haircut</b>  PL 30: <i>Oh, you look so pretty, where have you been to the hairdresser's?</i>	<b>1. Making a compliment on a haircut</b>  ENG 12: you look absolutely fabulous! What a change! Which hairdresser's did you go to?
<b>2. Compliment on a new mobile phone</b>  PL 99: How much did you pay for this baby?	<b>2. Compliment on a new mobile phone</b>  ENG 7: Oh god I'm jealous, I want one! ENG 8: ah that's so lush! ENG 34: nice toy mate, can I play? :) ENG 47: is it on contract? ENG 56: Ooh check it out! ENG 95: iPhone wasn't good enough then?

<p><b>3. Compliment on passing a driving test on the first attempt</b></p> <p>PL 35: When are we drinking? So now you can take me somewhere ☺ ha ha</p> <p>PL 55: I will say to my sister: stupid people are always lucky.</p> <p>PL 59: You're so lucky ☺</p> <p>PL 84: <i>Now you will be driving after a party.</i></p> <p>PL 97: <i>How many people have you run over?</i></p> <p>PL 99: Finally I have someone to pick me up from the parties</p>	<p><b>3. Compliment on passing a driving test on the first attempt</b></p> <p>ENG 46: nice, no more walking for me!</p> <p>ENG 78: Finally</p> <p>ENG 86: drop me to work tomorrow, please</p> <p>ENG 87: I need a lift to a shop</p> <p>ENG 93: I can finally quit my driving role!</p> <p>ENG 100: I knew you'd be the clever one in the family</p>
<p><b>4. Compliment on playing the guitar</b></p> <p>PL 78: I'm impressed by people with different interests to those of ordinary people.</p> <p>PL 86: Mate, I didn't know that you're doing so well.</p>	<p><b>4. Compliment on playing the guitar</b></p> <p>ENG 2: Nice tune!</p> <p>ENG 11: you sound like Bon Jovi mate (A COMPLIMENT IF A PESON THINKS THAT BON JOVI IS A GOOD MUSICIAN)</p> <p>ENG 18: I had no idea!</p> <p>ENG 24: I'm speechless</p> <p>ENG 26: are you in a band?</p> <p>ENG 41: You kept that talent secret</p> <p>ENG 45: never would have thought that you are so talented</p> <p>ENG 59: that's such a lovely song (doesn't necessarily mean that the players skills are good, the complimenter may just like the song)</p> <p>ENG 94: we should play together sometime mate, where have you been hiding this talent?</p>

Table 7. 2. Making a compliment

A given act of communication is often used, not to perform a particular speech act, or even to perform several speech acts simultaneously (say, one direct speech act and one or more indirect speech acts), but rather to provide more or less conclusive evidence for a range of assumptions that the communicator intended (or may be assumed with varying degrees of confidence to have intended) to convey by that act. The 'troublesome' data shows that even when engaging in the communication of informally institutionalized types of communicative act, people sometimes (even often) do not use formulaic and socially expected utterances. A good example of this is the following compliment on a new mobile phone (from



the PL data): *How much did you pay for this baby?* Depending on the context, the speaker may intend to imply at the same time that she/he admires the mobile phone, that she/he disapproves of spending a lot of money on mobile phones or that she/he would consider buying the same model if it is not too expensive, that she/he believes the complimentee must be well off, etc. In some contexts, some of these assumptions may be communicated simultaneously with varying degrees of strength (see Chapter 4).

Other compliments are ‘troublesome’ because it may not be entirely clear what the compliment object is. Thus, *You look fabulous!* May be intended as a compliment on a specific aspect of the complimentee’s appearance or about the complimentee’s overall appearance. The following examples of compliments on a new haircut (see 1 in Table 7.2 above) are relatively easy to interpret. They pose a risk of offending a hearer. Examples PL30 and ENG 12 can be interpreted as requests for more information and imply that the speaker is paying a compliment only to achieve some other goals, in this case, perhaps fishing for information about the name of hairdresser’s. This can imply to the hearer that the speaker is jealous of his/her new haircut and wants to get a similar one herself/ himself, so the compliment was not made only to acknowledge a change in appearance and please the hearer (see Section 2.5.4b on sincerity of compliments) but also to achieve a personal goal of the complimenter. A better idea of the intentions behind these compliments could be obtained by looking closely at supersegmental features of the utterances. That is something that future research could fruitfully focus on.

PL 30: *Oh, you look so pretty, where have you been to the hairdresser’s?*

ENG 12: you look absolutely fabulous! what a change! which hairdresser's did you go to?

The utterance PL 92, below, again can be interpreted as a back-handed compliment. Looking good is generally a desirable property. By using the present tense form of the verb the speaker indicates clearly enough that the time referred to is the time of the utterance. Semantically, the adverbial ‘today’ is redundant, so,

in terms of the balance of contextual effects and mental effort, it is justified only if it has some pragmatic function. It seems reasonable to assume that the adverbial is adequately relevant provided that the speaker, by using it, intends to implicate something about the contrast between the hearer's appearance on the day of the utterance and her/his appearance on (most) other days. So the utterance may easily be taken to implicate (i.e. to imply intentionally) something that is undesirable to the hearer; that she/he looks less good on (most) other days: PL 92: *You look fantastic today.*

The 'troublesome' compliments in both the Polish and the English sets of data can be analyzed in terms of the same pragmatic concepts used in the consideration of troublesome responses to compliments. As a detailed pragmatic analysis would require more specific information about the mutual cognitive environments of the participants, paralinguistic features which accompany speech and about the setting in which communication takes place, there is no gain in considering how the analysis might proceed for each group of 'troublesome' examples of compliments which are all listed below. However, the tentative analyses considered here, are specific enough to highlight the ways in which the interaction of individual, cultural and situational factors can be brought together in providing a pragmatic analysis which takes account of culture specific contexts in which communicative acts are interpreted.

#### **7.4.2 Troublesome refusals**

Examples from the refusals' data which call for a pragmatic account were found in the scenarios presented in Table 7.3 (page 207).

<b>Polish data:</b>	<b>English data:</b>
<b>1. Birthday party invitation</b>  PL 39: You know, I will come round on Friday for coffee with the wishes, how about that? PL 64: Hey, I would like to, but my brother's wedding is on the same day. I think we will make up for that.	<b>1. Birthday party invitation</b>  ENG 17: I've accidentally double booked myself ENG 26: My cousin's wedding is on the same day ENG 93: do you mind if I pop in another time?
<b>2. Looking after a pet dog</b>  PL 20: Of course I would love to take the dog, but I'm going to work. PL 52: You know what, there's a problem. I have to go to work unexpectedly this weekend.	<b>2. Looking after a pet dog</b>  ENG 74: I have to go to work this weekend ENG 93: Would it be ok if I help you find someone else to look after your dog?
<b>3. Haircut offer</b>  PL 4: I'm growing it. PL 56: I was at the hairdresser's recently. PL 84: I have actually been to the hairdresser's yesterday. Maybe another time. PL 93: I'm growing a pony tail to look like a Harley's guy	<b>3. Haircut offer</b>  ENG 12: I'm a girl Mike ENG 25: maybe another time ENG 49: My hairdresser would kill me Mike ENG 76: I will think about it
<b>4. Getting a tattoo</b>  PL 4: It looks cool when you're young, when you're old it's a disaster. . PL 5: Maybe I will think it through and then I will let you know PL 8: I wouldn't be as brave. PL 12: Maybe next time PL 23: I prefer piercing to tattoos because they don't leave a mark for the whole life. PL 57: And then they won't let me into my house ha ha PL 77: Human body is beautiful enough without this sort of accessories. It doesn't need a tattoo. PL 78: Cool tattoo. But I can't see myself as a tattooed person. PL 90: hmm, I haven't made up my mind yet that I want to have a tattoo for the rest of my life.	<b>4. Getting a tattoo</b>  ENG 2: Well, I'd need to think what to get first... ENG 4: I'm scared of needles ENG 36: maybe next time ENG 59: I'm scared

Table 7. 3. Making refusals

Indirect refusals, tend to communicate something other than the refusal itself. One reason for this is that refusals are inherently face threatening, so, by refusing indirectly, the speaker may intend to save her/his own positive face and also mitigate the threat to the hearer's positive face. This is typically achieved, not by performing a series of distinct indirect speech acts but by conveying with varying degrees of strength some implicatures which are likely to achieve the intended effect on the hearer. To give but one example, the utterance *I'm a girl Mike* in response of an offer of a haircut, provides a justification for the refusal (because, in the light of general world knowledge about people and haircuts, it is optimally relevant only if interpreted as a refusal) on the grounds that the refuser is a young woman. In interpreting this utterance the hearer will most likely search through the pool of contextual assumptions that the speaker intended him to interpret the utterance against. It is interesting to note that the speaker may simultaneously be implicating something negative about: (a) the speaker's offer of a haircut, (b) being surprised at the speaker's offer, (c) her preference that the speaker should not make the offer again, and so on.

The data, including the examples in table 7.3m shows that there are significant similarities between refusals in England and Poland. Thus, in both cultures people give reasons for refusing, with Poles being more elaborate, sometimes offering to make up for refusing by suggesting alternative actions. This is particularly noticeable in refusals of invitation to the birthday party. Refusals to look after the pet dog are generally more direct, but in this scenario one of the English respondents proposed an alternative: to find somebody who would look after the dog. One of the reasons for this may be that it is common in England for people to look after other peoples' pets, especially if they had their own, so the favour could be returned. It is unsurprising that both groups of respondents found it relatively easy to refuse in this situation, because the favour asked for is evidently one which could easily be a major imposition on the favour giver's time and effort. However, one of the Polish respondents chose to explicitly assert her/his willingness to help and only after that gave her/his reason for not being able to help. Refusals of the offer of a haircut and tattoo suggest that people in both cultures see these offers as somewhat intrusive, which could explain why they

refuse rather strongly, whether implicitly or explicitly. Their refusals in both groups include: (a) references to their personal preferences regarding hairstyle and personal views on tattoos, (b) conventionally polite ways of refusing (such as *I'll think about it and I'll let you know; maybe next time*), which is a way of refusing to engage with the offer, or (c) more idiosyncratic ways of refusing (mostly by English respondents refusing the offer of a new haircut:

ENG 12: I'm a girl Mike

ENG 49: My hairdresser would kill me Mike

The speaker's intended interpretation of each of these refusals depends on the availability of particular contextual assumptions to the hearer, assumptions about why it is that the hearer has some relevant knowledge about girls which would lead him to the realisation that the speaker would not accept the offer of a haircut. In ENG 49, the speaker seems to give an evidently unconvincing reason for refusing the offer. This might be intended to implicate that the speaker actually does not like the offer, but prefers somewhat ironically to attribute the disapproval to her hairdresser. It is interesting that Polish respondents gave more elaborate refusals to the offer of a tattoo, talking about personal tastes, preferences and dilemmas, which suggests that they did not feel the offer was too intrusive. In contrast to the Poles, English respondents gave less informative answers which may be taken to implicate a lack of willingness to engage with the offer, possibly because it is rather intrusive. While this explanation seems plausible, it calls for further investigation.

## 7.5 Issues relating to classification

Classifications provided by previous research in the field have been limited to the data that has been collected in this study. More categories have been observed as necessary to complement the classification that has been proposed so far (Section 6.2, 2.5.3 and 2.6.2). Also, the focus of the classification in existing literature is

mainly on the directness/indirectness of the speech acts of compliments and refusals and responses to them.

As shown in Chapter 6, following on from the classification of compliments and refusals into 'direct' and 'indirect', English and Polish compliments and refusals seem to be mainly direct (see Section 6.3.1a: compliments and Section 6.3.2a: refusals). This is readily accounted for in terms of efficiency in communication, in particular, in terms of economy of effort (see Chapter 4). Since human cognition is geared towards the maximization of relevance (see the Cognitive Principle of Relevance, Sperber and Wilson 1995), it seems that making explicit compliments should be more common in both cultures in order to achieve desired effects (i.e. to compliment somebody or request more information, see Section 7.4.1 point 7) or at least to try to achieve the desired effect by recognising which type of information is worth communicating. The interpretation is guided by considerations of relevance to the hearer and is constrained by the mutual cognitive environment of the interlocutors. A good example of an interesting interpretation of a compliment is the understanding of the compliment on baking skills (cupcakes) as conveying the implicature that the complimenter has made an indirect request to be given the recipe. Following the Relevance-theoretic production strategy, the speaker should aim for the least effort demanding utterance from the point of view of the hearer (Žegarac, 2004). Therefore, whether a compliment on the products of the hearer's baking skills is interpreted as an indirect request will largely depend on the context immediately available to the hearer. Moreover, it seems reasonable to argue that, other things being equal, we should expect refusals to be 'direct'. A direct refusal is more likely to be understood correctly (i.e. as a refusal rather than indirect, perhaps somewhat reluctant, acceptance) which is important because in many situations the failure to communicate the refusal may have serious negative social consequences.. So, refusals present two conflicting pressures on the speaker: the pressure to communicate the message clearly and the pressure to minimise the threat to the hearer's face. A direct refusal involving additional face mitigating devices has the potential to convey the message clearly, while saving both the hearer's expenditure of mental effort and the hearer's positive face.

In light of assumptions about positive face wants (roughly, a person's desire to be approved of), a speaker who anticipates that a particular communicative act (e.g. refusal of an offer) will trigger a negative emotional response in the hearer will, if she/he wishes to maintain a good social rapport with the hearer, try to produce a communicative act which avoids giving rise to, or at least minimizes, the anticipated negative emotional effect. The strategies which can reasonably be expected to achieve this include: explaining that the refusal is inevitable, that it is due to circumstances beyond the speaker's control, expressing regret at having to refuse, suggesting making plans for the future which neutralize the inconvenience of the refusal for the hearer, and others. So, if the speaker anticipates that the information conveyed by the refusal will have some undesirable emotional (perlocutionary) effects on the hearer, the communicative act aimed at conveying the undesirable information while removing or reducing the negative emotional effects will be linguistically more complex than one which would be optimally relevant if the refusal is not expected to have a negative emotional effect on the hearer.

In the context of these observations, it is easy to explain why Polish respondents made consistently longer, more complex, refusals than English respondents: English participants did not tend to associate refusals with negative emotional valence. Therefore, English refusers (who are members of the same culture) did not anticipate that their refusals would trigger negative emotional effects, and their refusals were comparatively brief. However, Polish participants associated refusals consistently with negative emotional valence. Therefore, Polish refusers anticipated this likely negative emotional effect, and tried to neutralize it to at least some extent by using strategies which made their refusal comparatively elaborate.

The present study provides evidence for the need to shift the focus of classification to the participants' intentions and relevance in the situation: the speaker's intention in producing a particular speech act and the hearer's intentions when this speech act is received and responded to. The data classification is not always straightforward as the responses do not always follow the patterns

established by researchers in the previous studies carried out before this one. The more informants are asked for responses, the more different types of responses are likely to be produced, depending on the various characteristics of the informants, including their social status, education level, occupation and age. More attention seems to have been paid in previous classifications to superficial features of speech acts, than to their pragmatic functions. Thus, the data collected in the present study shows that a more natural classification of compliment responses could be given if the focus is shifted from ‘acceptance’ and ‘rejection’ to appreciation. On the one hand, it is not always possible to categorize a particular compliment response as ‘acceptance’ or ‘rejection’, because what is relevant to the complimenter is whether the comlimentee appreciates the compliment. On the other hand, ‘appreciation’ as the basis for classifying compliments needs to draw on their pragmatic analysis in a way which takes account of the fact that a compliment is not merely appreciated or not appreciated, but may be appreciated to a greater or lesser extent. In other words, appreciation is a gradable, not a classificatory concept. The (inevitably) superficial consideration of some ‘troublesome’ examples given in this chapter shows how the Relevance framework (especially the distinction between communicative indirectness and strength with which assumptions are communicated, as well as an account of the observation that a given utterance may simultaneously convey a (vast) range of assumptions) makes it possible to relate degrees of appreciation to the implicatures conveyed by the act of communication.

Some valuable insights were provided by the responses related to the way informants felt in each of the situations that they had to respond to. This way of data collection elicited detailed comments from participants of the study about each of the situations (see Chapter 6 with the data) and allowed for a comparison of assumptions about the functions of compliments and refusals from the literature with real life examples.



## **7.6 Limitations and recommendations for future research**

### **7.6.1 Limitations**

Three main limitations have been identified in the present study. These relate to: a) research methodology, b) difficulties with data collection (including the type of data collected and participants of the study) and c) concepts used in discussion of the findings (e.g. considering non-verbal aspects of communication). These are discussed below and are followed by suggestions on how the study could have been improved, which are given in the form of recommendations for future research.

#### **a) Research Tools**

The first research limitation is related to drawbacks common to all research methods. As mentioned in Chapter 5, collecting naturally occurring data is very challenging and no data collection method is perfect. Therefore, having opted to use DCTs because of their advantages over other methods that I could have used, I took all steps I could to make sure the data resembles conversations in authentic situations as much as possible (see Chapter 5 and Appendix 3) to ensure the reliability of the study. Although the study relies mainly on written DCTs as the main data collection method, this data is compared to a limited sample of spoken exchanges collected through recordings and examples from semi-scripted and non-scripted radio interviews. More spoken data could have been collected to arrive at clearer conclusions about the similarities and the differences between spoken and written data and the extent to which written data resembles spoken data. Collecting data from more participants or more examples from radio interview would also allow wider scope of a discussions focusing on non-verbal and paralinguistic features of communication in relation to speech acts. One of the recommendations for future research might be to collect more naturally

occurring data (e.g. in the form of radio interviews similar to those used in this study or role plays) to investigate the role of intonation and body language in the interpretation of compliments and refusals.

#### b) Difficulties with data collection

There were several difficulties with collecting data in relation to the participants and the type of the data collected. The difficulties with respondents included finding participants for the recording part of data collection. This was challenging as participants seemed to despair at the prospect of having their voices recorded, even though the study is anonymous. Making a recording seems to deprive informants of the feeling of anonymity, even though they were informed that the materials would be listened to only by the researcher (and possibly an examiner if necessary) and would be transcribed and used as examples of responses as in the text of the thesis. Of course, recordings can pose a threat to anonymity, which is one of the ethical considerations in any research project (Dörnyei, 2007: 65). However, although appropriate steps were taken to ensure the anonymity of the participants in this study, a few informants withdrew the consent for their recordings to be used after the recordings had been made and their decisions were accepted without questioning and fully respected.

The most serious shortcoming of using radio interviews was that they included few refusals. Refusals, in so far as they occur at all, are embedded in reported speech and seem to be avoided; in situations where a refusal would have been possible (for instance when a request is communicated). Therefore, there were only few examples of refusals found in the unscripted radio interviews selected as a sample in the spoken data collection. The lack of refusals in unscripted radio interviews was to some extent made up for by English and Polish corpus data which include examples of spoken conversations. These, however, only include standardised forms of refusal and may not fully correspond to the way refusals are used outside of their conventional linguistic realisations.

Another limitation relates to informants selected for the study. Searching for participants from English and Polish culture has raised various questions about cultural and national boundaries (see Chapter 1). Although, respondents were selected to ensure that variables are as close as possible in both groups of informants in terms of age and gender, there are some differences between the participants in each group. Polish informants were selected among students at a higher education institution in Poland and were of similar age (see Chapter 5 and Appendix 5), whereas, English respondents had a wider age range. It was challenging to find a classroom that was within researcher's reach with only English students to conduct a study due to the multicultural character of the students population in the majority of British universities. Ideally, the study could have been carried out with respondents of a similar age. Apart from age differences, there was also an uneven gender distribution among participants in both groups. The present study was not concerned with gender differences in the production and reception of compliments and refusals, so this was not a major issue in this case. In a future follow up study, the samples could include equal numbers of female and male participants so the dimension of gender can be included in the investigation. Similarly, participants' occupation was different in both groups, as the Polish sample included only students and the English sample a combination of both: students and professionals. Also, participants' cultural knowledge and awareness were not taken into consideration. Therefore, their cultural affiliation was generalised, i.e. it was not clear how much English respondents knew about the Polish language and culture, and the other way round. It was also not clear to what extent this might affect their responses.

All of these factors are of some importance when making generalisations and conclusions about the particular samples of data used in the present study. The findings of this investigation include a several generalisations based the particular samples of respondents selected for the study. The fact that some findings are very similar to those of previous research studies (e.g. on a length of responses in written and spoken data: Jucker, 2009 and Yule, 2001) suggests that the original generalizations are valid. Of course, this assumption needs to be corroborated by further research.

The concern for the validity and reliability of the research findings led the researcher to extend the period of data collection, well beyond what was initially predicted. The estimated deadlines that were proposed had to be adjusted accordingly and additional data collection tools had to be used (data corpus) to ensure the quality of collected materials and the amount of data necessary to draw clear conclusions about communication of compliments and refusals in the Polish and the English cultures. Future research could be based on spoken data from naturally occurring conversations, which could be compared with the findings of the present study and provide valuable material for a more detailed discussion about the production and the comprehension of the speech acts of compliment and refusal.

#### c) Discussion of the findings

Having more data from naturally occurring conversations would allow for the analysis of suprasegmental features that have not been included in the the present study, due to constraints of time and space and the type of the data collected for this study (DCTs rather than spoken data). A more extensive use of spoken data from naturally occurring conversations would make it possible for future research to investigate the emotions associated with compliments and refusals , not only on the basis of respondents verbal reports, but also using the evidence presented by intonation, tone of voice, possibly also gestures and facial expressions.

#### **7.6.2 Future research**

In addition to the directions for further research suggested above, future research could aim to shed more light on the place of emotions in social interaction in general in the context of particular cultures, situations and institutionalized communicative acts, such as compliments and refusals, but also many others.

## **7.7 Conclusion and contribution of the study to the field of intercultural pragmatics**

There have been several comparative studies investigating English and Polish compliments and compliments' responses but none of these relate the discussion of findings to pragmatic theory. They also tend to focus on the categorisation of compliments according to their semantic features, rather than their impact on the hearer (e.g. appreciation) and the speaker's intentions and aspects of politeness. The contribution to the research on refusals is even more significant as this speech act has been under-researched. Few studies (if any) discuss in detail British English and Polish refusals, or refusal responses performed by native speakers and none compare English and Polish refusals and refusal responses, so the present study is unique in this respect. Similarly to compliments, refusals are analysed in terms of rapport between interlocutors rather than their semantic structure.

Emotional valence of compliments and refusals was investigated in this study in order to challenge the traditional assumption that compliments are seen as positive and refusals as negative. This assumption is challenged through the discussion of views on linguistic politeness and face needs in the existing literature, based on the evidence presented by the original data collected for this study (see Chapter 6).

Despite a number of limitations, the present study makes a valuable contribution to the field of intercultural pragmatics and speech acts research in at least four ways: 1) through original research based on mixed methodology comparing spoken and written methods of data collection, 2) by comparing two speech acts that are traditionally considered as opposites in terms of their emotional valence (compliments are seen in positive terms and refusals in negative terms) in two relatively proximate cultures and 3) through developing a model for analysis which brings together pragmatic theory a cognitive perspective on emotions.

## References

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## **Appendices**

### **1. Questionnaire (Pilot Study DCTs)**

#### **1.1 English version**



Hello

My name is Joanna and I am working on a research project at University of Bedfordshire. The project investigates people's responses to some everyday social situations.

I would be grateful for your help with the project. This would involve completing a simple questionnaire (which should not take longer than 10 minutes).

You may complete the questionnaire anonymously if you wish. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

If you would like more information about this project or to receive any publications resulting from this project, please email me [Joanna.bhatti@beds.ac.uk](mailto:Joanna.bhatti@beds.ac.uk).

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Joanna Bhatti

**Questionnaire:**

1. Would you agree to be contacted again in connection with this research?  
YES/NO.

2. If you answered YES, how could the researcher contact you (e.g. email, mobile phone please state in the space provided below [the information you give will not be disclosed to anyone except the researcher who has asked you to complete the questionnaire and will be destroyed within one month from the completion of the questionnaire])

---

**Demographics:**

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:**

Please write in the space provided what you would say in the following situations and then describe how they made you feel. Please give your immediate responses without taking too much time to think about what you will say.

**A.** You really like your sister's/brother's new haircut and you want to compliment her/him on it.

You meet her/him and you say:

---

---

How did you feel about paying a compliment to your sister/ brother in this situation?

---

---

---

**B.** You have been invited to your friend Paul's birthday party, but you can't make it as the party falls on the same day as your cousin's wedding.

Paul: Hi, I'm calling to check whether you're still coming to my birthday party this Saturday.

You say:

---

---

How did you feel when you had to refuse going to Paul's birthday party?

---

---

---

**C.** You are wearing a new coat and you meet your friend Mary in the street.

Mary: Great Coat!

You

reply:

---

---

How did you feel when Mary complimented you on your coat?

---

---

---

**D.** You are organising a barbeque this weekend and you invited your neighbour John.

John: I'm sorry I won't be able to make it this weekend. I'm going away for a few days with my family.

You reply:

---

---

How did this situation (what John said and your reply) make you feel?

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---

---



## 1.2 Polish version



Witam

Mam na imię Joanna i pracuję nad projektem badawczym na University of Bedfordshire. Projekt ten bada reakcje ludzi na sytuacje z życia codziennego.

Byłabym wdzięczna za Twoją pomoc w moim projekcie. Wiąże się to z wypełnieniem krótkiej ankiety (która nie zajmuje dłużej niż 10 minut).

Możesz wypełnić tę ankietę anonimowo. Twój udział jest dobrowolny i możesz w każdej chwili wycofać się z udziału.

Jeśli chciałbyś/ chciałabyś otrzymać więcej informacji na temat tego projektu albo informacje o ewentualnych publikacjach z nim związanych, proszę napisz do mnie na podany adres email: [Joanna.Bhatti@beds.ac.uk](mailto:Joanna.Bhatti@beds.ac.uk)

Dziękuję za współpracę.

Joanna Bhatti

## **Ankieta**

1. Czy wyrażasz zgodę żebym skontaktowała się z Tobą ponownie w sprawie tej pracy badawczej? TAK/ NIE.
2. Jeśli odpowiedziałeś/ odpowiedziałaś TAK, proszę wpisz poniżej w jaki sposób mogłabym się z Tobą skontaktować? (Np. Email, Telefon) [Informacje które podasz zostaną wykorzystane tylko na potrzeby tej pracy badawczej i zostaną zniszczone w ciągu miesiąca od wypełnienia tej ankiety].

---

## **Personalalia:**

Wiek \_\_\_\_\_ Płeć \_\_\_\_\_ Zawód \_\_\_\_\_

## **Instrukcje:**

Proszę udzielić odpowiedzi na poniższe sytuacje wykorzystując puste pola i opisać jak się czuleś/czulaś dając tą odpowiedź. Proszę udzielić pierwszej odpowiedzi która przyjdzie Ci na myśl bez zbytniego zastanawiania się co powiedzieć.

- A.** Bardzo podoba Ci się nowa fryzura twojego brata/ twojej siostry i chcesz jemu/ jej sprawić komplement .

Spotykasz ją/ jego i mówisz:

---

---

Jak się czuleś prawiąc ten komplement swojej siostrze/ swojemu bratu?

---

---

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- B.** Zostałeś zaproszony/ zostałaś zaproszona na urodziny swojego kolegi Pawła, ale niestety nie możesz przyjść na przyjęcie gdyż przypada ono w tym samym dniu co wesele Twojego kuzyna.

Paweł: Cześć, dzwonię żeby potwierdzić czy wciąż przychodzisz na moje przyjęcie?

Odpowiesz jemu:

---

---

Jak się czułeś gdy musiałeś/ musiałaś odrzucić zaproszenie Pawła?

---

---

**C.** Masz na sobie nowy płaszcz gdy spotykasz na ulicy swoją koleżankę Marysię.  
Marysia: Świetny płaszcz!

Odpowiesz jej:

---

---

Jak się poczułaś/poczułeś gdy Marysia sprawiła Ci komplement na temat twojego płaszcza?

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---

---

**D.** Organizujesz grilla w ten weekend i zaprosiłeś / łaś swojego sąsiada Jana.

Jan: Przepraszam, ale w ten weekend jestem zajęty. Wyjeżdżam z rodziną na kilka dni.

Odpowiesz na to:

---

---

Jak się poczułaś/poczułeś w tej sytuacji (gdy Jan odrzucił twoje zaproszenie a ty musiałeś/ musiałaś na to zareagować)?

---

---

---

## 2. Questionnaire (Main Study DCTs)

### 2.1. English version



Hello

My name is Joanna and I am working on a research project at University of Bedfordshire. The project investigates people's responses to some everyday social situations.

I would be grateful for your help with the project. This would involve completing a simple questionnaire.

You may complete the questionnaire anonymously if you wish. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Please provide information about your age, gender and occupation.

If you would like more information about this project or to receive any publications resulting from this project, please email me:

Joanna.bhatti@beds.ac.uk.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Joanna Bhatti

## Questionnaire

1. Would you agree to be contacted again in connection with this research?  
YES/NO.

2. If you answered YES, how could the researcher contact you (e.g. email, mobile phone please state in the space provided below [the information you give will not be disclosed to anyone except the researcher who has asked you to complete the questionnaire and will be destroyed within one month from the completion of the questionnaire])

---

### Demographics:

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Course \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 1.

#### Instructions:

Please write in the space provided what you would say in the following situations and then describe how they made you feel. Please give your immediate responses without taking too much time to think about what you will say.

1. You really like your sister's/brother's new haircut and you want to compliment her/him on it.

You meet her/him and you say:

---

---

How did you feel about paying a compliment to your sister/ brother in this situation?

---

---

---

2. Your housemate Caroline notices that you have lost some weight recently and comments on this.

Caroline: Oh! You look absolutely amazing!

You say:

---

---

How did you feel when your weight loss has been complimented?

---

---

---

**3.** You are wearing a new coat and you meet your friend Mary in the street.  
Mary: That coat's really cool!

You reply:

---

---

How did you feel when Mary complimented you on your coat?

---

---

---

**4.** *Your classmate Martin has just got a brand new fancy mobile phone. You too really like it.*

*You say:*

---

---

*How did this situation make you feel?*

---

---

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**5.** *Your sister/ brother (or close relative) has just passed his/ her driving test on the first attempt.*

*You say:*

---

---

*How did you feel in this situation?*

---

---

---

**6.** *You got an 'A' for your last assignment which was the highest grade in your group!*

*Your friend Alex is really happy for you.*

*Alex: Congratulations! Well done!*

*You say:*

---

---

*How did you feel when your achievement was appreciated by Alex?*

---

---

---

**7.** *You baked cupcakes for your classmates.*

*Chris: Lovely cupcakes! You need to teach me how to make them.*

*Alice: yummy!*

*You say:*

---

---

*How did you feel when our baking skills have been complimented?*

---

---

---

**8.** *You have just heard your housemate Tom playing the guitar and you have absolutely enjoyed it, as you had no idea that he was such a great performer. You want to compliment him.*

*You say:*

---

---

*How did you feel when you complimented Tom?*

---

---

---

## Part 2.

### Instructions:

Please write in the space provided what you would say in the following situations and then describe how they made you feel. Please give your immediate responses without taking too much time to think about what you will say.

1. You have been invited to your friend Paul's birthday party, but you can't make it as the party falls on the same day as your cousin's wedding.

Paul: Hi, I'm calling to check whether you're still coming to my birthday party this Saturday.

You say:

---

---

How did you feel when you had to refuse going to Paul's birthday party?

---

---

---

2. You are organising a barbeque this weekend and you invited your next door neighbour John who you are friends with.

John: I'm sorry I won't be able to make it this weekend. I'm going away for a few days with my family.

You reply:

---

---

How did this situation (what John said and your reply) make you feel?

---

---

---

3. Your next door neighbour Suzy asked you to look after her pet dog while she's away for the weekend. At first, you have agreed, but the day before she was going away, it turned out that you need to work over the coming weekend.



What will you tell Suzy?

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---

How does this situation make you feel?

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---

---

4. You have just won two cinema tickets and want to take your cousin Jack to watch a film that both of you have talked about recently. When you ask Jack it turns out that he has just seen it with his girlfriend.

Jack: Sorry, I saw it with Julie last Saturday.

You say:

---

---

How did you feel in this situation?

---

---

---

5. You see your classmate Anne walking in the rain as you drive past her. You offer her a lift home, but Anne says she is going to visit her grandma who lives just round the corner.

You say:

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---

How did Anne's refusal make you feel?

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---

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6. You are visiting your cousin Mike. He has just cut his children's hair himself. You are thinking those must be the worst haircuts you have ever seen. But, when Mike asks for your opinion on the haircuts you don't want to upset him and you tell him that the kids look just great. Encouraged by your response, Mike offers to cut your hair too, so that your hair can look just like theirs.

You say:

---

---

How did this situation make you feel?

---

---

---

7. You are going out with your flatmate Mark to see your friend Betty who recently got married. As you are leaving your flat, you suggest that Mark gives a short speech for the newlyweds in front of their guests, because you know that he is famous from making excellent speeches. He doesn't know the couple and have had no time to prepare the speech, so he turns down your request.

You say:

---

---

How did you feel when Mark turned down your request?

---

---

---

8. One of your mates, Bob, has been showing off his new tattoo to everyone. You disapprove of tattoos and you would certainly never have one yourself, but you don't want to hurt Bob's feelings, so you say: 'Nice tattoo, where did you have it done?'

Bob: Thanks. This guy Andy has got a studio not far from here. Why don't you also get a tattoo, if you like mine? We can give him a call right now.

You say:

---

---

How did you feel when you had to react to Bob's suggestion?

---

---

---

## 2.2. Polish version



Witam

Mam na imię Joanna i pracuję nad projektem badawczym na University of Bedfordshire w Wielkiej Brytanii. Projekt ten bada reakcje ludzi na sytuacje z życia codziennego.

Byłabym wdzięczna za Twoją pomoc w moim projekcie. Wiąże się to z wypełnieniem krótkiej ankiety. Możesz wypełnić tę ankietę anonimowo. Twój udział jest dobrowolny i możesz w każdej chwili wycofać się z udziału. Proszę wpisz informacje na temat swojego wieku, płci i zawodu.

Jeśli chciałbyś/ chciałybyś otrzymać więcej informacji na temat tego projektu albo informacje o ewentualnych publikacjach z nim związanych, proszę napisz do mnie na podany adres email:

[Joanna.bhatti@beds.ac.uk](mailto:Joanna.bhatti@beds.ac.uk)

Dziękuję za współpracę.

Joanna Bhatti

## **Ankieta**

1. Czy wyrażasz zgodę żebym skontaktowała się z Tobą ponownie w sprawie tej pracy badawczej? TAK/ NIE.
  2. Jeśli odpowiedziałeś/ odpowiedziałaś TAK, proszę wpisz poniżej w jaki sposób mogłabym się z Tobą skontaktować? (Np. Email, Telefon) [Informacje które podasz zostaną wykorzystane tylko na potrzeby tej pracy badawczej i zostaną zniszczone w ciągu miesiąca od wypełnienia tej ankiety].
- 

### **Personalia:**

Wiek \_\_\_\_\_ Płeć \_\_\_\_\_ Zawód \_\_\_\_\_

### **Część 1.**

#### **Instrukcje:**

Wyobraź sobie, że bierzesz udział we wszystkich niżej opisanych sytuacjach. Na wszystkie te sytuacje zareaguj w sposób jak najbardziej charakterystyczny i naturalny dla Ciebie i wyraż jak się czuleś/ łaś w każdej z nich.

1. Bardzo podoba Ci się nowa fryzura twojego brata/ twojej siostry (bliskiego znajomego/ znajomej) i chcesz jemu/ jej sprawić komplement .

Spotykasz ją/ jego i mówisz:

---

---

Jak się poczułeś/ łaś prawiąc ten komplement swojej siostrze/ swojemu bratu (bliskiej znajomej/ bliskiemu znajomemu)?

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2. Twoja współlokatorka Karolina zauważyła że ostatnio straciłeś/ łaś trochę na wadze i postanowiła to skomentować.

Karolina: Oh! Wyglądasz naprawdę niesamowicie!

Odpowiesz jej:

---

---

Jak się poczułeś/ łaś gdy Twoja utrata wagi została skomplementowana?

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**3.** Masz na sobie nowy płaszcz gdy spotykasz na ulicy swoją koleżankę Marysię.  
Marysia: Świetny płaszcz!

Odpowiesz jej:

---

---

Jak się poczułaś/poczułeś gdy Marysia sprawiła Ci komplement na temat twojego płaszcza?

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---

**4.** *Twój kolega z grupy, Marcin, właśnie sprawił sobie nowy wymyślny telefon komórkowy. Tobie też się on bardzo podoba.*

*Co mu powiesz?*

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---

*Jak się poczułeś/ łaś prawiać komplement Marcinowi na temat jego nowego telefonu?*

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---

---

**5.** *Twoja siostra/ twój brat (lub bliski znajomy/ bliska znajoma) właśnie zdała/ zdał egzamin na prawo jazdy za pierwszym podejściem.*

*Powiesz jej/ jemu:*

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---

*Jak się poczułeś/łaś w tej sytuacji?*

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---

**6.** *Dostałeś/łaś '5' ze swojej ostatniej pracy zaliczeniowej i była to najwyższa ocena w Twojej grupie. Twój kolega Olek bardzo się cieszy z Twojego osiągnięcia.*

*Olek: Gratulacje! Świetny wynik!*

*Odpowiesz mu:*

---

---

*Jak się poczułeś/łaś gdy Twoje osiągnięcie zostało docenione przez Olka?*

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---

**7.** *Upiekłeś/łaś babeczki dla swoich kolegów z grupy/klasy.*

*Krzysiek: Świetne babeczki! Musisz mnie nauczyć jak je upiec.*

*Alicja: Pycha!*

*Odpowiesz im:*

---

---

*Jak się poczułaś/łeś gdy twoi koledzy sprawili ci komplement na temat twoich zdolności cukierniczych?*

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---

**8.** *Właśnie usłyszałeś/łaś jak twój współlokator Tomek gra na gitarze i bardzo Ci się to spodobało, gdyż nie miałas/ miałeś pojęcia że jest on takim wspaniałym artystą. Chcesz mu pogratulować.*

*Powiesz mu:*

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*Jak się poczułeś/łaś prawiąc Tomkowi ten komplement?*

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## **Część 2.**

### **Instrukcje:**

Wyobraź sobie, że bierzesz udział we wszystkich niżej opisanych sytuacjach. Na wszystkie te sytuacje zareaguj w sposób jak najbardziej charakterystyczny i naturalny dla Ciebie i wyraż jak się czułeś/ łaś w każdej z nich.

1. Zostałeś zaproszony/ zostałaś zaproszona na urodziny swojego kolegi Pawła, ale niestety nie możesz przyjść na przyjęcie gdyż przypada ono w tym samym dniu co wesele Twojego kuzyna.

Paweł: Cześć, dzwonię żeby potwierdzić czy wciąż przychodzisz na moje przyjęcie?

Odpowiesz jemu:

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---

Jak się czułeś gdy musiałeś/ musiałaś odrzucić zaproszenie Pawła?

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2. Organizujesz grilla w ten weekend i zaprosiłeś / łaś swojego sąsiada Jana z którym się przyjaźnisz.

Jan: Przepraszam, ale w ten weekend jestem zajęty. Wyjeżdżam z rodziną na kilka dni.

Odpowiesz na to:

---

---

Jak się poczułaś/poczułeś w tej sytuacji (gdy Jan odrzucił twoje zaproszenie a ty musiałaś/ musiałas na to zareagować)?

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3. Twoja sąsiadka z naprzeciwka, Zuzia, poprosiła Cię żebyś zaopiekował/ zaopiekowała się jej pieskiem pod jej nieobecność w ten weekend. Początkowo zgodziłeś/ łaś się, ale dzień przed jej wyjazdem okazało się, że musisz pracować w ten nadchodzący weekend.

Co powiesz Zuzi?

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---

Jak się poczułeś/ łaś w tej sytuacji (gdy musiałaś/ łaś odmówić Zuzi)?

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4. Właśnie wygrałaś/ łeś dwa bilety do kina i chcesz żeby twój kuzyn Jacek obejrzał z Tobą ten film o którym ostatnio rozmawialiście. Kiedy oferujesz to Jackowi okazuje się, że on już widział ten film ze swoją dziewczyną.  
Jacek: Wybacz, ale już byłem na tym filmie z Julką.

Odpowiesz mu:

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---

Jak się poczułaś/ łeś w tej sytuacji?

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5. Jadąc samochodem widzisz, idącą w deszczu, Anię, koleżankę z twojej grupy/klasy. Oferujesz że ją podwieziesz ale Ania mówi, że idzie odwiedzić babcię, która mieszka tuż za rogiem.

Odpowiesz jej:

---

---



Jak się poczułeś/ łaś gdy Ania odrzuciła twoją ofertę ?

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---

6. Jesteś w odwiedzinach u swojego kuzyna Michała. Michał właśnie samodzielnie obciął włosy swoich dzieci. Myślisz sobie że to najgorsze fryzury jakie widziałeś/ łaś w swoim życiu. Ale, gdy Michał pyta się o twoją opinię o fryzurach swoich dzieci, nie chcesz go zasmucić i mówisz mu że dzieciaki wyglądają po prostu świetnie. Zachęcony twoją odpowiedzią, Michał oferuje obciąć też twoje włosy .

Odpowiesz mu:

---

---

Jak się poczułeś/ łaś w tej sytuacji?

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7. Wychodzisz ze swoim współlokatorem Markiem odwiedzić twoją znajomą Beatę, która właśnie wyszła za mąż. Wychodząc z mieszkania sugerujesz żeby Marek wygłosił krótką przemowę na cześć nowożeńców w towarzystwie ich gości, bo wiesz że on jest znany z ciekawych przemówień. On jednak nie zna pary ani nie miał czasu się przygotować więc odmawia.

Co mu odpowiesz?

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---

Jak się poczułeś/łaś gdy Marek Ci odmówił?

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---

8. Jeden z twoich znajomych, Robert, chwali się wszystkim swoim nowym tatuażem. Ty nie wyrażasz aprobaty dla tatuaży i z pewnością nigdy byś sobie żadnego nie sprawił/ sprawiła, ale nie chcesz zranić Roberta więc mówisz: ‘ Fajny tatuaż, gdzie go zrobiłeś?’

Robert: Dzięki. Ten facet, Andrzej, ma studio tatuażu niedaleko stąd. Dlaczego też sobie nie zrobisz takiego, skoro mój tak Ci się podoba? Możemy do niego zadzwonić w tej chwili.

Odpowiesz na to:

---

---

Jak się poczułeś/ łaś gdy musiałeś/ łaś zareagować na sugestię Roberta?

---

---

---

### **3. Recording scenarios**

#### **3.1. English Version**

##### **Spoken Data Collection: Recording Script**

###### **Instructions**

You will hear a sequence of recordings containing various social situations and you will be asked to record your responses to them. Please listen to the following scenarios and record your immediate response, i.e. the first thing that comes to your mind in each of the situations without taking too much time to think about what you will say.

###### **Scenario A**

*Your close friend has just passed his/ her driving test on the first attempt.*

*What would you say to him?*

*Record your response.*

*How did you feel in this situation?*

*Record your response.*

###### **Scenario B**

You have just won two cinema tickets and want to take your cousin Jack to watch a film that both of you have talked about recently. When you ask Jack it turns out that he has just seen it with his girlfriend.

Jack: Sorry, I saw it with Julie last Saturday.

What would you say?

*Record your response.*

How did you feel in this situation?

*Record your response.*

### **Scenario C**

You are wearing a new coat and you meet your friend Mary in the street.

Mary: That coat's really cool!

You reply:

*Record your response.*

How did you feel when Mary complimented you on your coat?

*Record your response.*

### **Scenario D**

You have been invited to your friend Paul's birthday party, but you can't make it as the party falls on the same day as your cousin's wedding.

Paul: Hi, I'm calling to check whether you're still coming to my birthday party this Saturday.

What would you say?

*Record your response.*

How did you feel when you had to refuse going to Paul's birthday party?

*Record your response.*

**That was the last scenario. Thank you for taking part in this project.**

### **3.2. Polish Version**

#### **Scenariusz nagrania**

##### **Instrukcje:**

Za chwilę usłyszysz kilka nagrań zawierających różne sytuacje z życia codziennego i zostaniesz poproszony o nagranie swoich odpowiedzi do każdej z sytuacji. Wysłuchaj po kolei wszystkich scenariuszy i nagraj swoją odpowiedź po każdym z nich. Udziel pierwszej odpowiedzi, która przyjdzie Ci na myśl bez zbytniego zastanawiania się co powiedzieć.

##### **Scenariusz A**

*Twój bliski znajomy właśnie zdał egzamin na prawo jazdy za pierwszym podejściem.*

*Co mu powiesz?*

*Nagraj swoją odpowiedź.*

*Jak się poczułeś w tej sytuacji?*

*Nagraj swoją odpowiedź.*

##### **Scenariusz B**

Właśnie wygrałeś dwa bilety do kina i chcesz żeby twój kuzyn Jacek obejrzał z Tobą ten film o którym ostatnio rozmawialiście. Kiedy oferujesz to Jackowi okazuje się, że on już widział ten film ze swoją dziewczyną.

Jacek: Wybacz, ale już byłem na tym filmie z Julką.

*Co mu odpowiesz?*

*Nagraj swoją odpowiedź.*

*Jak się poczułaś/ łeś w tej sytuacji?*

*Nagraj swoją odpowiedź.*

### **Scenariusz C**

Masz na sobie nowy płaszcz gdy spotykasz na ulicy swoją koleżankę Marysię.

Marysia: Świetny płaszcz!

Co jej odpowiesz?

*Nagraj swoją odpowiedź.*

Jak się poczułaś/poczułeś gdy Marysia sprawiła Ci komplement na temat twojego płaszcza?

*Nagraj swoją odpowiedź.*

### **Scenariusz D**

Zostałeś zaproszony/ zostałaś zaproszona na urodziny swojego kolegi Pawła, ale niestety nie możesz przyjść na przyjęcie gdyż przypada ono w tym samym dniu co wesele Twojego kuzyna.

Paweł: Cześć, dzwonię żeby potwierdzić czy wciąż przychodzisz na moje przyjęcie?

Co mu odpowiesz?

*Nagraj swoją odpowiedź.*

Jak się czułeś gdy musiałeś/ musiałaś odrzucić zaproszenie Pawła?

*Nagraj swoją odpowiedź.*

**To był ostatni scenariusz. Dziękuje za udział w tym projekcie.**

## 4. Corpus Data

### 4.1 Comparison: English and Polish conventional compliments' expressions

ENG	PL
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What a nice..</li> <li>2. What a lovely</li> <li>3. I'm proud of you</li> <li>4. Well done</li> <li>5. I like your ...</li> <li>6. ... looks good</li> <li>7. That's a beautiful</li> <li>8. Congratulations</li> <li>9. I'm impressed</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ładnie wyglądasz (You look nice)</li> <li>2. Jestem z ciebie dumna/ Jestem z ciebie dumny (male form: no records)(I'm proud of you)</li> <li>3. Masz ładną ... (You have a nice...)</li> <li>4. Super(great)</li> <li>5. Brawo (Bravo)</li> <li>6. Podoba mi się twoja... (I like your ...)</li> <li>7. Ale super (How great)</li> </ol>

Table 1.1 Linguistic Corpora: English and Polish Compliments' Data Comparison

### 4.2 Comparison: English and Polish conventional refusals' expressions

ENG	PL
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I don't want to</li> <li>2. Sorry, I won't...</li> <li>3. I'm awfully sorry</li> <li>4. I won't be able to</li> <li>5. I'm really sorry</li> <li>6. I'm not into that</li> <li>7. I can't</li> <li>8. I'm sorry</li> <li>9. Refuse</li> <li>10. I am sorry</li> <li>11. I'm afraid</li> <li>12. Unfortunately</li> <li>13. I'm sorry but...</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nie chcę (I don't want to)</li> <li>2. Bardzo mi przykro (I'm really sorry)</li> <li>3. Nie dam rady (I can't make it)</li> <li>4. Nie, dziękuję (No, thank you)</li> <li>5. Nie, dzięki (No, thanks)</li> <li>6. Nie przyjdę (I won't come)</li> <li>7. Nie mam czasu (I don't have time)</li> <li>8. Nie mogę (I can't)</li> <li>9. Sory (Sorry)</li> <li>10. Sorry</li> <li>11. Przykro mi (I'm sorry)</li> <li>12. Nie ma szans (Not a chance)</li> <li>13. Oj, nie (oh, no)</li> </ol>

Table 1.2 Linguistic Corpora: English and Polish Refusals' Data Comparison

## 5. Descriptive Statistics Data

Table 1.3 and Figure 1.1 present the overview of the descriptive statistics focusing on the participants' age. The minimum age of English participants was 18 years old and the maximum 68, whereas the minimum age of Polish participants was 19 years old and maximum 26 years old. The average age of participants is 23.

Nationality		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
All Participants	Age	200	18.00	68.00	23.3800
English	Age	100	18.00	68.00	26.0900
Polish	Age	100	19.00	26.00	20.6700

Table 1.3. Descriptive Statistics: English and Polish Participants Comparison (Age and Nationality)

Table 1.4 below presents English female participants' average age was 23 and male participants' 29, whereas Polish female and participants' average age was 20 years old.

Nationality	Gender		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
English	Female	Age	61	18.00	46.00	23.8361
	Male	Age	39	20.00	68.00	29.6154
Polish	Female	Age	68	19.00	26.00	20.5882
	Male	Age	32	19.00	23.00	20.8437

Table 1.4. Descriptive Statistics: Nationality, Age and Gender Division

The majority of respondents in both groups were between 19 and 27 years old:

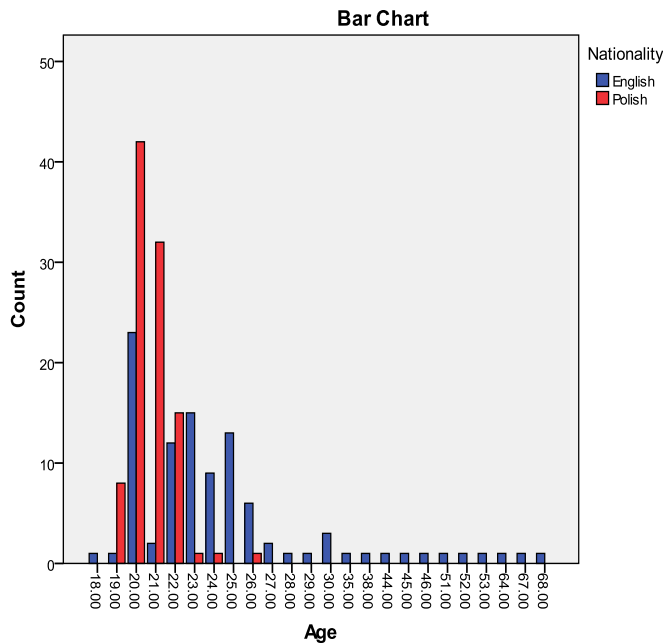


Figure 1. 1. Descriptive Statistics: English and Polish Participants Comparison (Age and Nationality)



## 6. Results

### 6.1 Data Classification and Examples of Responses

#### A. Making a compliment:

- 1) with a direct reference to a complimented object

##### Compliment on a new haircut:

ENG 90: *That's a fine haircut.*

PL 10: *This haircut really suits you.* [Bardzo ładnie ci w tej fryzurze.]

- 2) with an indirect reference to a compliment object

##### Compliment on a new fancy mobile phone:

ENG 19: *Wow, you're always up to date with technology*

##### Compliment on passing driving test at a first attempt:

PL 34: *I always knew that our genes make us so bright* [Zawsze wiedziałam, że nasze geny powodują u nas taką 'bystrość'.]

- 3) Other (alternative response or no compliment)

##### Compliment on a new fancy mobile phone:

ENG 26: *contract or pay as you go?*

ENG 7: *Oh god I'm jealous, I want one!*

ENG 8: *Ah that's so lush!*

##### Compliment on passing driving test at a first attempt:

PL 97: *How many people have you run over?* [Ile osób przejechałeś?]

#### B. Responding to a compliment:

- 1) Accepted (with 3 subcategories: directly, indirectly, accepted and returned)

##### Accepted Directly:

ENG 1: *Thank you - I tried really hard*

PL 68: *I know, thanks.* [Wiem, dzięki.]

##### Accepted Indirectly:

ENG 27: *No more studying!*

PL 85: *Second Hand.* [Używany.]

##### Accepted and Returned:

ENG 42: *Yours is too, thanks Mary*

- 2) Rejected (with 2 subcategories: directly and indirectly)

##### Rejected Directly:

ENG 5: *Oh, it's really nothing*

PL 37: *They are not this good at all!* [Nie są wcale takie dobre!]

##### Rejected Indirectly:

ENG 40: *It's my secret*

PL 85: *Second Hand.* [Używany.]

3) Returned Only

PL 75: *You don't lack anything either.* [No Tobie też niczego nie brakuje]

4) Ignored/ Alternative Response

A response to a compliment on baking skills:

ENG 66: *No problem, whenever you want.*

PL 61: *I can give you a recipe if you want.* [Jak chcecie mogę wam dać przepis.]

C. Making refusals:

1) Direct

Refusal to a Birthday Party Invitation:

ENG 2: *Sorry, I can't make it due to a family arrangement.*

PL 100: *I'm sorry, I can't.* [Przykro mi ale nie mogę.]

2) Indirect

ENG 17: *I've accidentally double booked myself*

ENG 94: *I'm in between cuts*

ENG 95: *I have just been to the hairdresser*

PL 67: *I have been to the hairdresser's recently, maybe next time.* [Byłam ostatnio u fryzjera, może następnym razem.]

PL 93: *I'm growing a pony tail to look like a Harley's guy.* [Zapuszczam kucyka żeby wyglądać jak Harley'owiec]

3) No refusal

ENG 34: *I will try to swing by later after the wedding, the party is nearby*

PL 92: *I will think it through, ok.* [Przemyszę to jeszcze, ok]

D. Responding to a refusal:

1) Favourable

ENG 3: *No problem Mark, thought I'll just ask*

PL 2: *Ok. So we will have a barbeque together next time.* [Ok. W takim razie innym razem pogrillujemy wspólnie.]

2) Unfavourable

Response to a refusal to give a speech:

ENG 7: *You're a wimp!*

Response to a refusal to a barbeque invitation:

PL 29: *Oh ok, it's a shame that you haven't told me about it before.* [Aha, szkoda, że wcześniej mi o tym nie powiedziałeś.]

3) Mixed

Response to a refusal to going to a cinema

ENG 7: *That's a shame, any good?*

PL 7: *That's such a shame. Maybe we can go and watch some other film together? Yeah?*  
[*No to wielka szkoda, no to może pójdziemy na inny film razem? Co?*]

4) Other/ Alternative response

ENG 2: *Please make a speech? Pleeeeeeease?*

PL 4: *First of all, I won't go to watch a movie with a cousin* [*Po pierwsze nie pójde na film z kuzynem*]

E. Emotional responses

1) Positive

ENG 11: *Good.*

ENG 93: *Good, I can't be in two places at the same time.*

PL 22: *I was proud.* [*Byłam dumna.*]

PL 100: *Very well.* [*Bardzo dobrze.*]

2) Negative

ENG 10: *Disappointed*

ENG 81: *Very bad and guilty indeed as I know that this will cause inconvenience for my friend*

PL 78: *I hate being in the centre of attention.* [*Nienawidze być w centrum zainteresowania.*]

PL 60: *A little bit disappointed because I have been trying to put on weight.* [*Trochę zawiedziona, ponieważ od pewnego czasu próbuje przytyć.*]

3) Neutral

ENG 14: *Normal*

ENG 88: *Neutral - these things happen.*

PL 88: *Normal* [*Normalnie.*]

PL 79: *I didn't feel anything.* [*Nic nie czułem.*]

4) Mixed

ENG 17: *Sad but it was my fault*

ENG 93: *Understanding. I did put him on the spot.*

PL94: *I feel stupid because I don't like lying.* [*Głupio, bo nie lubię kłamać.*]

PL 97: *Dissatisfaction and understanding for him, he gave a reason after all.*  
[*Niezadowolnienie i zrozumienie dla niego, w końcu podał argument.*]

Table 1. 5. Classification of Responses: Examples

## 6.2 Pilot Study Results

### Making a compliment

COMPLIMENTS		Making a compliment	
		PL respondents (30)	ENG respondents (30)
Types	Direct Reference to the Object	23 (76.66%)	29 (96.66%)
	Indirect Reference to the Object	7 (23.33%)	1 (3.33%)
	Other (Lack of compliment)	0	0
Emotions	Positive	21 (70%)	23 (76.66%)
	Negative	1 (3.33%)	0
	Neutral (or no emotions)	7 (23.33%)	5 (16.66%)
	Mixed	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.66%)

Table 1. 6. Pilot Study. Making Compliments: English and Polish Data

### Responding to a compliment

COMPLIMENTS			Responding to a compliment	
			PL respondents (30)	ENG respondents (30)
Types	Accepted	Directly	25 (83.33%)	27 (90%)
		Indirectly	4 (13.33%)	1 (3.33%)
		and Returned	1 (3.33%)	1 (3.33%)
	<u>Total Accepted</u>		30 (100%)	29 (96.66%)
	Rejected	Directly	0	0
		Indirectly	0	1 (3.33%)
	<u>Total Rejected</u>		0	1 (3.33%)

<b>Emotions</b>	<b>Returned Only</b>	0	0
	<b>Ignored</b>	0	0
	<b>Positive</b>	29 (96.66%)	27 (90%)
	<b>Negative</b>	0	0
	<b>Neutral</b>	0	1 (3.33%)
	<b>Mixed</b>	1 (3.33%)	2 (6.66%)

Table 1. 7. Pilot Study. Responding to Compliments: English and Polish Data

### Making a refusal

<b>REFUSALS</b>		<b>Making a Refusal (Birthday Party)</b>	
		<b>PL respondents (30)</b>	<b>ENG respondents (30)</b>
<b>Types</b>	<b>Direct</b>	18 (60%)	20 (66.66%)
	<b>Indirect</b>	12 (40%)	10 (33.33%)
	<b>No refusal</b>	0	0
<b>Emotions</b>	<b>Positive</b>	0	11 (36.66%)
	<b>Negative</b>	19 (63.33%)	12 (40%)
	<b>Neutral</b>	3 (10%)	0
	<b>Mixed</b>	8 (26.66%)	7 (23.33%)

Table 1. 8. Pilot Study. Making Refusals: English and Polish Data

### Responding to a refusal

REFUSALS		Responding to a refusal	
		PL respondents (30)	ENG respondents (30)
Types	Favourable	10 (33.33%)	21 (70%)
	Unfavourable	2 (6.66%)	0
	Mixed	18 (60%)	9 (30%)
	Alternative Response	0	0
Emotions	Positive	7 (23.33%)	18 (60%)
	Negative	11 (36.66%)	4 (13.33%)
	Neutral	6 (20%)	4 (13.33%)
	Mixed	6 (20%)	4 (13.33%)

Table 1. 9. Pilot Study. Responding to Refusals: English and Polish Data

## 6.3 Main Study Results

### 6.3.1 English Data Examples

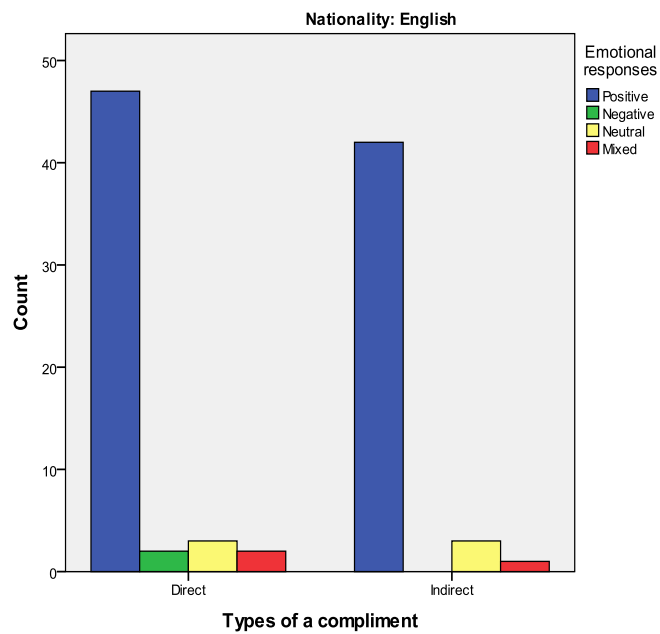


Figure 6. 1 English Data: Making a compliment on a haircut (Scenario 1)

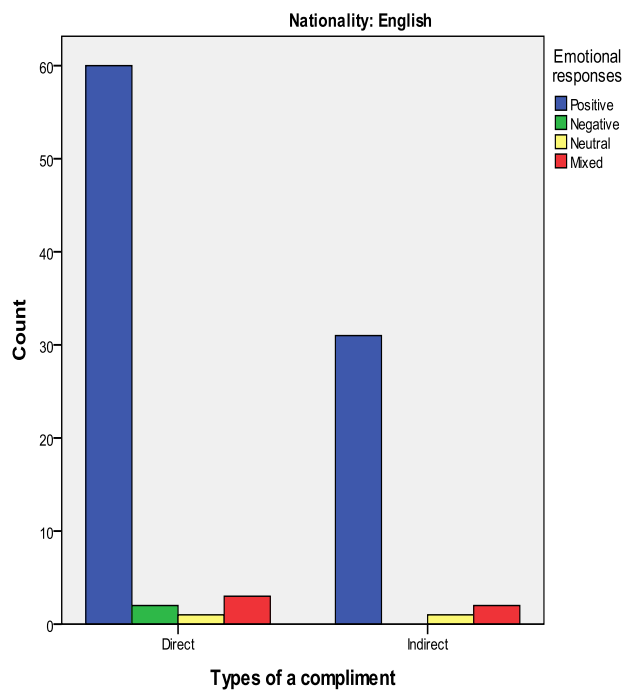


Figure 6. 2 English Data: Making a compliment on playing guitar (Scenario 4)

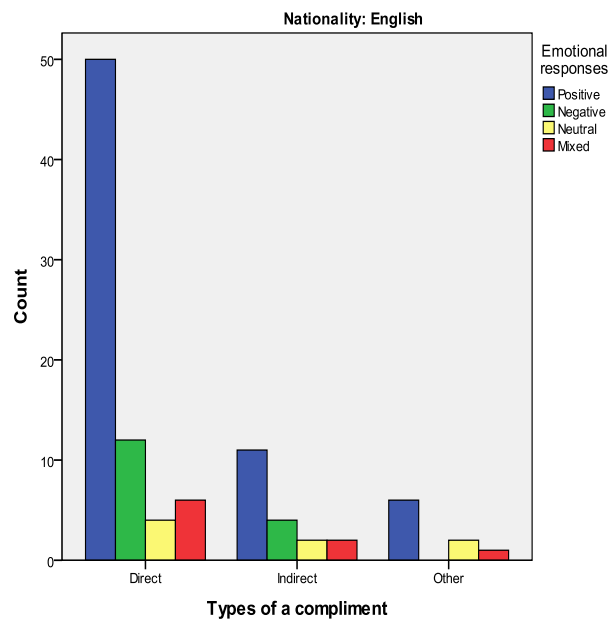


Figure 6. 3 English Data: Making a compliment on a new mobile phone (Scenario 2)

### 6.3.2 Polish Data Examples

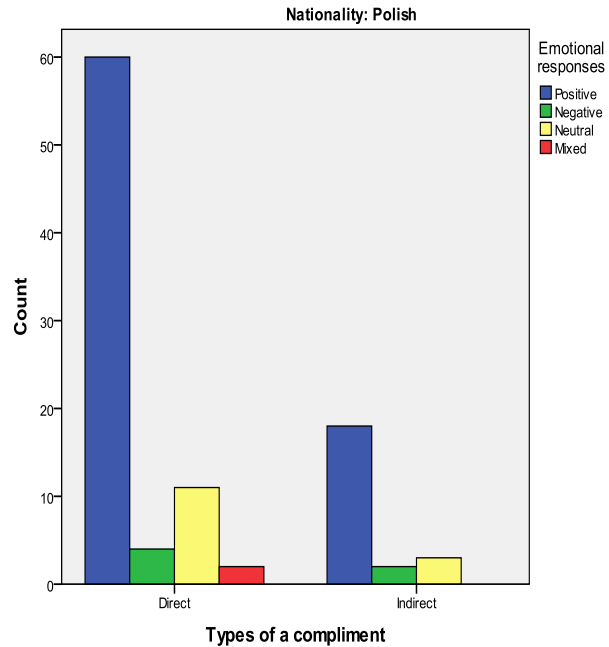


Figure 6. 4 Polish Data: Making a compliment on playing guitar (Scenario 4)



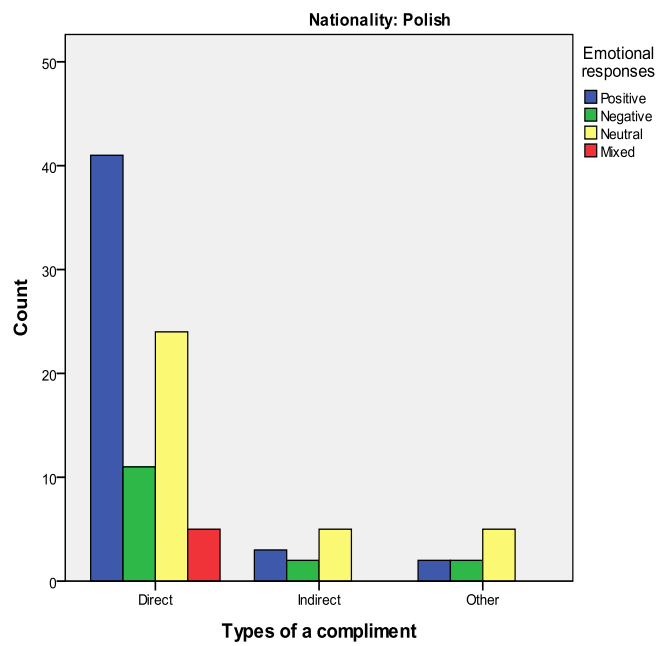


Figure 6. 5 Polish Data: Making a compliment on a new mobile phone (Scenario 2)

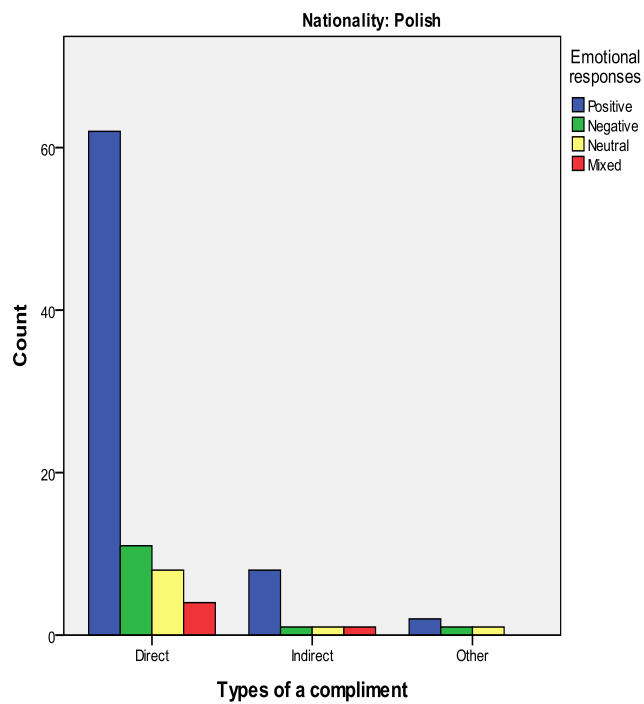


Figure 6. 6 Polish Data: Making a compliment on passing a driving test (Scenario 3)

### 6.3.3 Compliments

#### Responding to a compliment: English Data

COMPLIMENTS			Responding to a compliment			
			Appearance (Weight loss)	Possession (Coat)	Achievement (Assignment Grade)	Skills (Baking skills)
Types	Accepted	Directly	72	74	66	44
		Indirectly	11	10	19	41
		and Returned	4	9	1	0
	<u>Total Accepted</u>		87	93	86	85
	Rejected	Directly	5	0	6	1
		Indirectly	8	7	6	2
	<u>Total Rejected</u>		13	7	12	3
	Returned Only		0	0	0	0
	Ignored/ Other		0	0	2	12
Emotions	Positive		73	84	70	87
	Negative		16	6	20	7
	Neutral		3	4	0	0
	Mixed		8	6	10	6

Table 1.10. Main Study. Responding to compliments: English Data

### Responding to a compliment: English Data

COMPLIMENTS			Responding to a compliment			
			Appearance (Weight loss)	Possession (Coat)	Achievement (Assignment Grade)	Skills (Baking skills)
Types	Accepted	Directly	73	79	87	53
		Indirectly	10	4	6	32
		and Returned	4	13	3	0
	<b>Total Accepted</b>		87	96	96	85
	Rejected	Directly	8	0	1	2
		Indirectly	3	0	0	2
	<b>Total Rejected</b>		11	0	1	4
	<b>Returned Only</b>		0	0	0	0
	<b>Ignored/ Other</b>		2	0	3	11
Emotions	<b>Positive</b>		74	88	81	94
	<b>Negative</b>		14	0	6	2
	<b>Neutral</b>		4	7	5	3
	<b>Mixed</b>		8	5	8	1

Table 1.11. Main Study. Responding to compliments: Polish Data

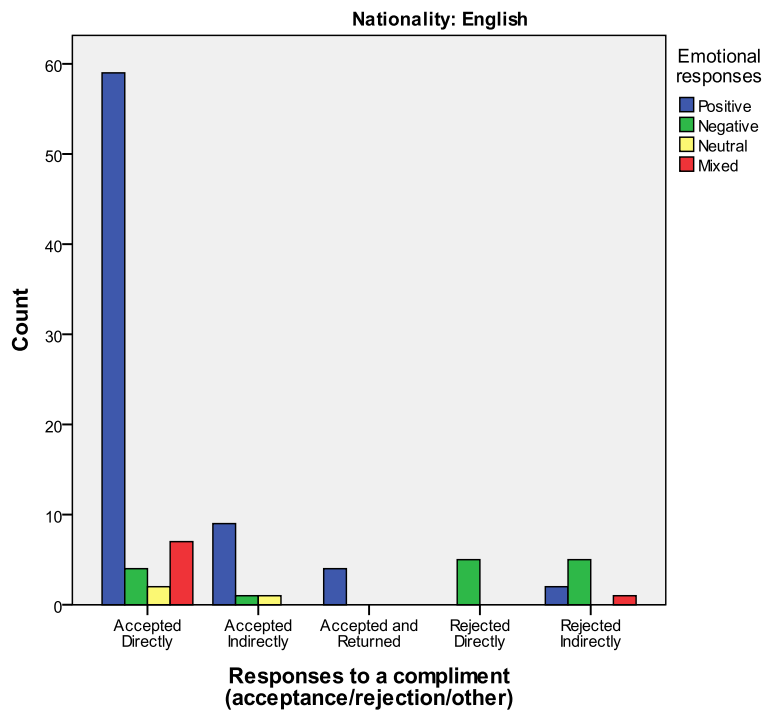


Figure 6. 7. English Data: Responding to a compliment on weight loss

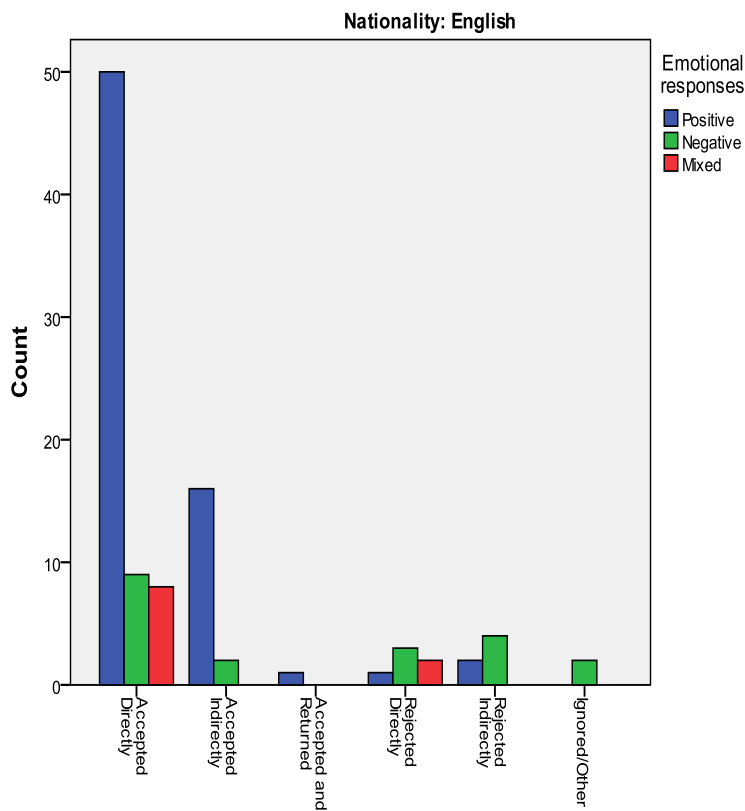


Figure 6. 8. English Data: Responding to a compliment on a high assignment grade

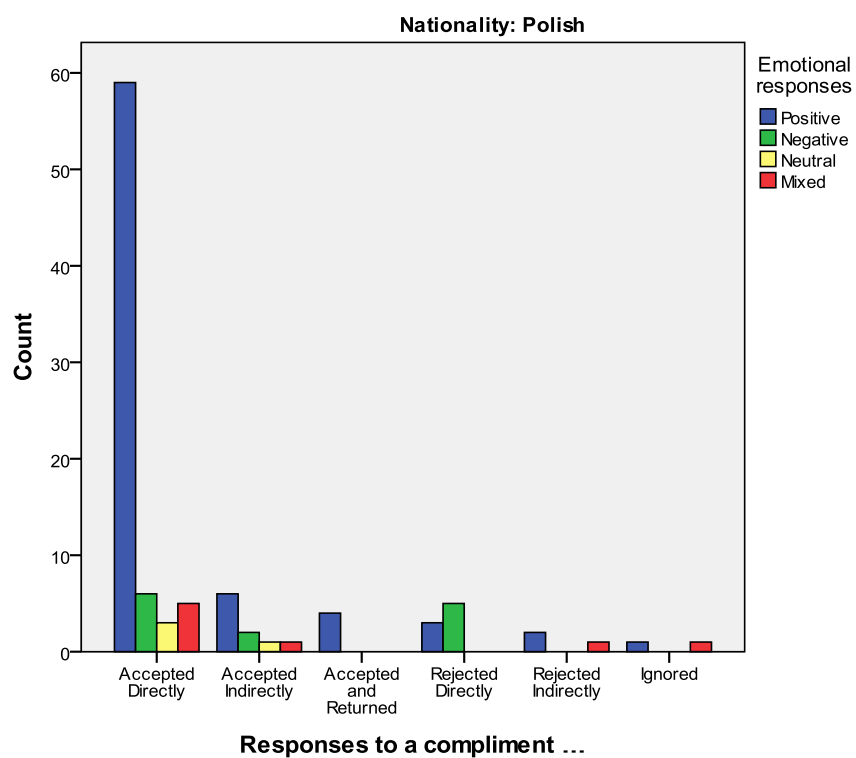


Figure 6. 9. Polish Data: Responses to a compliment on a weight loss (Scenario 1)

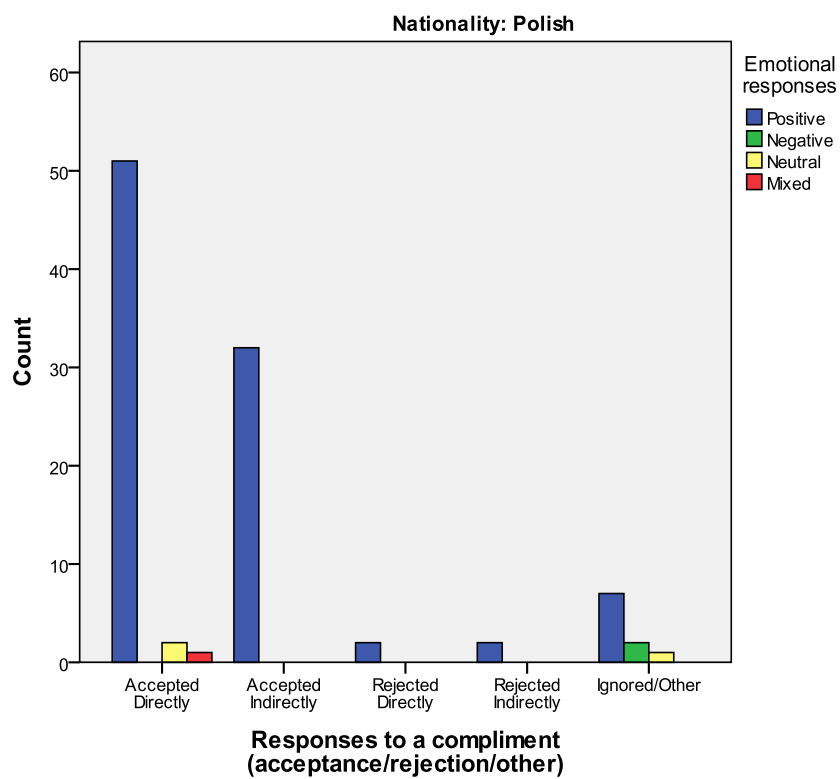


Figure 6. 10. Polish Data: Responses to compliments on baking skills (Scenario 4)

### 6.3.4 Refusals

#### Making a refusal: English Data

REFUSALS		Making a Refusal				
		Invitation (Birthday Party)	Request (Looking after pet dog)	Suggestion (Haircut)	Offer (Tattoo)	Total (400 responses)
Types	Direct	77	91	53	59	280 (70%)
	Indirect	21	9	47	41	118 (29.5%)
	No refusal	2	0	0	0	2 (0.5%)
Emotions	Positive	32	52	37	43	164 (41%)
	Negative	41	39	45	40	165 (41.25%)
	Neutral (or no emotions)	9	6	7	12	34 (8.5%)
	Mixed	18	3	11	5	37 (9.25%)

Table 1.12. Main Study. Making Refusals: English Data

### Making a refusal: Polish Data

REFUSALS		Making a Refusal				
		Invitation (Birthday Party)	Request (Looking after pet dog)	Suggestion (Haircut)	Offer (Tattoo)	Total (400 responses)
Types	Direct	89	78	75	72	314 (78.5%)
	Indirect	10	16	25	28	79 (19.75%)
	No refusal	1	6	0	0	7 (1.75%)
Emotions	Positive	4	10	17	28	59 (14.75%)
	Negative	85	78	29	48	240 (60%)
	Neutral (or no emotions )	5	11	14	23	53 (13.25%)
	Mixed	6	1	10	1	18 (4.5%)

Table 1.13. Main Study. Making Refusals: Polish Data

### Responding to a refusal: English Data

REFUSALS		Responding to a Refusal				
		Invitation (Barbeque)	Suggestion (Seeing a film)	Offer (A lift)	Request (to give a speech)	Total (out of 400 responses)
<b>Types</b>	<b>Favourable</b>	93	58	72	80	303 (75.75%)
	<b>Unfavourable</b>	0	14	0	6	20 (5%)
	<b>Mixed</b>	4	9	1	4	18 (4.5%)
	<b>Alternative response (indifferent, unclassified)</b>	3	19	27	10	59 (14.75%)
<b>Emotions</b>	<b>Positive</b>	73	61	70	69	273 (68.25%)
	<b>Negative</b>	11	22	10	19	62 (15.5%)
	<b>Neutral (or no emotions)</b>	10	8	17	8	43 (10.75%)
	<b>Mixed</b>	6	9	3	4	22 (5.5%)

Table 1.14. Main Study. Responding to Refusals: English Data



### Responding to a refusal: Polish Data

REFUSALS		Responding to a Refusal				
		Invitation (Barbeque)	Suggestion (Seeing a film)	Offer (A lift)	Request (Speech)	Total
<b>Types</b>	<b>Favourable</b>	39	41	53	23	156 (39%)
	<b>Unfavourable</b>	23	33	8	29	93 (23.25%)
	<b>Mixed</b>	35	18	2	14	69 (17.25%)
	<b>Alternative response (indifferent, unclassified)</b>	3	8	37	34	82 (20.5%)
<b>Emotions</b>	<b>Positive</b>	14	22	33	31	100 (25%)
	<b>Negative</b>	60	57	16	46	179 (44.75%)
	<b>Neutral (or no emotions)</b>	7	15	42	22	86 (21.5%)
	<b>Mixed</b>	19	6	9	1	35 (8.75%)

Table 1.15. Main Study. Responding to Refusals: Polish Data

## 7. Statistical Significance

### 7.1 Compliments

a) Responding to a compliment on weight loss

#### All respondents

Correlations		Responses to a compliment (acceptance/rejection/other)	Emotions
Responses to a compliment (acceptance/rejection/other)	Pearson Correlation	1	.185**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	200	200
Emotions	Pearson Correlation	.185**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	200	200

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1.16. Correlations Scenario 1: Responding to a compliment. All Respondents

a) Making a compliment on baking skills (cupcakes)

#### All Respondents

Correlations		Responses to a compliment (acceptance/rejection/other)	Emotions
Responses to a compliment (acceptance/rejection/other)	Pearson Correlation	1	.179*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	200	200
Emotions	Pearson Correlation	.179*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
	N	200	200

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1.17. Correlations Scenario 4: Responding to a compliment. All Respondents

## English Data

Correlations				
Nationality			Responses to a compliment (acceptance/rejection/other)	Emotions
English	Responses to a compliment (acceptance/rejection/other)	Pearson Correlation	1	.202 <sup>*</sup>
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.044
		N	100	100
	Emotional responses	Pearson Correlation	.202 <sup>*</sup>	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	
		N	100	100

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1.18.. Correlations Scenario 4: Responding to a compliment. English data

## 7.2 Refusals

### a) Responding to a refusal on barbeque invitation

#### All Respondents

Correlations				
			Response to a refusal	Emotions
Response to a refusal	Pearson Correlation		1	.254 <sup>**</sup>
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000
	N		200	200
Emotions	Pearson Correlation		.254 <sup>**</sup>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N		200	200

\*\*.. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1.19. Correlations Scenario 1: Responding to a refusal. All Respondents

b) Responding to a refusal to an offer of cinema tickets

**Polish respondents**

Correlations			Response to a refusal	Emotions
Nationality				
Polish	Response to a refusal	Pearson Correlation	1	-.225*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.025
		N	100	100
	Emotions	Pearson Correlation	-.225*	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	
		N	100	100

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1.20. Correlations Scenario 2: Responding to a refusal. Polish data

c) Responding to a refusal giving a speech

**All Respondents**

Correlations			Response to a refusal	Emotions
Response to a refusal				
Pearson Correlation			1	.292**
Sig. (2-tailed)				.000
N			200	200
Emotions				
Pearson Correlation			.292**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)			.000	
N			200	200

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1.21. Correlations Scenario 4: Responding to a refusal. All Respondents

**English Respondents**

Correlations			Response to a refusal	Emotions
Nationality				
English	Response to a refusal	Pearson Correlation	1	.468**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	100	100
	Emotions	Pearson Correlation	.468**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	100	100

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1.22. Correlations Scenario 4: Responding to a refusal. English data

## 8. Spoken and written data comparison

### English compliments

<b>COMPLIMENTS:</b>		<b>Written Data Collection</b>		<b>Spoken Data Collection</b>	
<b>Making a compliment</b>		<b>Pilot Study</b>	<b>Main Study</b>	<b>Recordings</b>	<b>Radio Interviews</b>
<b>Types</b>	<b>Direct Reference to Compliment Object</b>	29 (96.66%)	270 (67.5%)	9 (90%)	36 (80%)
	<b>Indirect Reference to Compliment Object</b>	1 (3.33%)	114 (28.5%)	1 (10%)	9 (20%)
	<b>Other (No compliment)</b>	0	16 (4%)	0	0
<b>Emotions</b>	<b>Positive</b>	23 (76.66%)	344 (86%)	7 (70%)	40 (88.88%)
	<b>Negative</b>	0	21 (5.25%)	1 (10%)	1 (2.22%)
	<b>Neutral (or no emotions)</b>	5 (16.66%)	16 (4%)	0	2 (4.44%)
	<b>Mixed</b>	2 (6.66%)	19 (7.75%)	1 (10%)	2 (4.44%)
	<b>Not specified</b>	0	0	1 (10%)	40 (88.88%)

Table 1.23. Written and Spoken Data Comparison. Making Compliments: English Data

## Polish Compliments

<b>COMPLIMENTS:</b> <b>Making a compliment</b>		<b>Written Data Collection</b>		<b>Spoken Data Collection</b>	
		<b>Pilot Study</b>	<b>Main Study</b>	<b>Recordings</b>	<b>Radio Interviews</b>
<b>Types</b>	<b>Direct Reference to Compliment Object</b>	23 (76.66%)	325 (81.25%)	9 (90%)	22 (57.89%)
	<b>Indirect Reference to Compliment Object</b>	7 (23.33%)	62 (15.5%)	1 (10%)	16 (42.1%)
	<b>Other (No compliment)</b>	0	13 (3.25%)	0	0
<b>Emotions</b>	<b>Positive</b>	21 (70%)	270 (67.5%)	8 (80%)	30 (78.94%)
	<b>Negative</b>	1 (3.33%)	36 (9%)	0	0
	<b>Neutral (or no emotions)</b>	7 (23.33%)	81 (20.25%)	0	7 (18.42%)
	<b>Mixed</b>	1 (3.33%)	16 (4%)	2 (20%)	1 (2.63%)

Table 1.24. Written and Spoken Data Comparison. Making Compliments: Polish Data

### English Compliments' Responses

<b>COMPLIMENTS: Responding to a compliment</b>			<b>Written Data Collection</b>		<b>Spoken Data Collection</b>	
			<b>Pilot Study</b>	<b>Main Study</b>	<b>Recordings</b>	<b>Radio Interviews</b>
<b>Types</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Directly</b>	27 (90%)	256 (64%)	9 (90%)	27 (60%)
		<b>Indirectly</b>	1 (3.33%)	81 (20.25%)	1 (10%)	7 (15.55%)
		<b>and Returned</b>	1 (3.33%)	14 (3.5%)	0	0
	<b><u>Total Accepted</u></b>		29 (96.66%)	351 (87.75%)	10 (100%)	34 (75.55%)
	<b>Rejected</b>	<b>Directly</b>	0	12 (3%)	0	4 (8.88%)
		<b>Indirectly</b>	1 (3.33%)	23 (5.75%)	0	4 (8.88%)
	<b><u>Total Rejected</u></b>		1 (3.33%)	35 (8.75%)	0	8 (17.77%)
	<b>Returned Only</b>		0	0	0	0
	<b>Ignored</b>		0	14 (3.5%)	0	3 (6.66%)
<b>Emotions</b>	<b>Positive</b>		27 (90%)	314 (78.5%)	9 (90%)	22 (48.88%)
	<b>Negative</b>		0	49 (12.25%)	1 (10%)	4 (8.88%)
	<b>Neutral</b>		1 (3.33%)	7 (1.75%)	0	9 (20%)
	<b>Mixed</b>		2 (6.66%)	30 (7.5%)	0	10 (22.22%)

Table 1.25. Written and Spoken Data Comparison. Responding to Compliments: English Data

### Polish Compliments' Responses

COMPLIMENTS: Responding to a compliment			Written Data Collection		Spoken Data Collection	
			Pilot Study	Main Study	Recordings	Radio Interviews
Types	Accepted	Directly	25 (83.33%)	292 (73%)	9 (90%)	12 (31.57%)
		Indirectly	4 (13.33%)	52 (13%)	0	17 (44.73%)
		and Returned	1 (3.33%)	20 (5%)	0	0
	<b>Total Accepted</b>		30 (100%)	364 (91%)	9 (90%)	29 (76.31%)
	Rejected	Directly	0	11 (2.75%)	1 (10%)	3 (7.89%)
		Indirectly	0	5 (1.25%)	0	4 (10.52%)
	<b>Total Rejected</b>		0	16 (4%)	1 (10%)	7 (18.42%)
	<b>Returned Only</b>		0	0	0	0
	<b>Ignored</b>		0	16 (4%)	0	2 (5.26%)
Emotions	<b>Positive</b>		29 (96.66%)	337 (84.25%)	8 (80%)	24 (63.15%)
	<b>Negative</b>		0	22 (5.5%)	1 (10%)	1 (2.63%)
	<b>Neutral</b>		0	19 (4.75%)	0	8 (21.05%)
	<b>Mixed</b>		1 (3.33%)	22 (5.5%)	1 (10%)	5 (13.15%)

Table 1.26 Written and Spoken Data Comparison. Responding to Compliments: Polish Data



## English Refusals

### Making a refusal

REFUSALS		Making a refusal		
		Written Data		Spoken Data
		Pilot Study (30 respondents)	Main Study (100 respondents)	Recordings (10 respondents)
Types	Direct	20 (66.66%)	280 (70%)	10 (100%)
	Indirect	10 (33.33%)	118 (29.5%)	0
	No refusal	0	2 (0.5%)	0
Emotions	Positive	11 (36.66%)	164 (41%)	1 (10%)
	Negative	12 (40%)	165 (41.25%)	3 (30%)
	Neutral	0	34 (8.5%)	0
	Mixed	7 (23.33%)	37 (9.25%)	6 (60%)
	Not Specified	0	0	0

Table 1.27. Written and Spoken Data Comparison. Making Refusals: English Data

## Polish Refusals

### Making a refusal

REFUSALS		Making a refusal		
		Written Data		Spoken Data
		Pilot Study (30 respondents)	Main Study (100 respondents)	Recordings (10 respondents)
Types	Direct	18 (60%)	314 (78.5%)	10 (100%)
	Indirect	12 (40%)	79 (19.75%)	0
	No refusal	0	7 (1.75%)	0
Emotions	Positive	0	59 (14.75%)	2 (20%)
	Negative	19 (63.33%)	240 (60%)	7 (70%)

	<b>Neutral</b>	3 (10%)	53 (13.25%)	0
	<b>Mixed</b>	8 (26.66%)	18 (4.5%)	1 (10%)
	<b>Not Specified</b>	0	0	0

Table 1.28. Written and Spoken Data Comparison. Making Refusals: Polish Data

## English Refusals

### Responding to a refusal

REFUSALS		Responding to a refusal		
		Written Data		Spoken Data
		Pilot Study (30 respondents)	Main Study (100 respondents)	Recordings (10 respondents)
<b>Types</b>	<b>Favourable</b>	21 (70%)	303 (75.75%)	1 (10%)
	<b>Unfavourable</b>	0	20 (5%)	6 (60%)
	<b>Mixed</b>	9 (30%)	18 (4.5%)	3 (30%)
	<b>Alternative Response</b>	0	59 (14.75%)	0
<b>Emotional Responses</b>	<b>Positive</b>	18 (60%)	273 (68.25%)	0
	<b>Negative</b>	4 (13.33%)	62 (15.5%)	5 (50%)
	<b>Neutral</b>	4 (13.33%)	43 (10.75%)	1 (10%)
	<b>Mixed</b>	4 (13.33%)	22 (5.5%)	3 (30%)
	<b>Not Specified</b>	0	0	1 (10%)

Table 1.29. Written and Spoken Data Comparison. Responding to Refusals: English Data

## Polish Refusals

### Responding to a refusal

REFUSALS		Responding to a refusal		
		Written Data		Spoken Data
		Pilot Study (30 respondents)	Main Study (100 respondents)	Recordings (10 respondents)
Types	Favourable	10 (33.33%)	156 (39%)	5 (50%)
	Unfavourable	2 (6.66%)	93 (23.25%)	2 (20%)
	Mixed	18 (60%)	69 (17.25%)	3 (30%)
	Alternative Response	0	82 (20.5%)	0
Emotions	Positive	7 (23.33%)	100 (25%)	3 (30%)
	Negative	11 (36.66%)	179 (44.75%)	3 (30%)
	Neutral	6 (20%)	86 (21.5%)	0
	Mixed	6 (20%)	35 (8.75%)	4 (40%)
	Not Specified	0	0	0

Table 1.30. Written and Spoken Data Comparison. Responding to Refusals: Polish Data